

The Preston Magazine



Issue 16

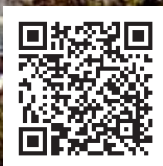
Dec/Jan 2014

Christmas in the Trenches
Preston Now and Then
Two Preston Mashers

FREE

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Preston Digital Archive

Annual Appeal

Our initial goal of collecting 8000 images before the commencement of Preston Guild 2012 has been met, but we need your help to expand the collection even more. So, cap in hand, like Oliver Twist, we humbly ask for more.

We know you must have musty old albums, biscuits tins and the odd sock drawer full of interesting items of Preston and the surrounding areas past. So how can you submit them to us

Read on !

1. If you have to ability to scan them to your computer, you can send them to our email address as attachments (300 dpi. Photo quality please) to prestondigitalarchive@hotmail.com
2. For the technically among us you can mail material to our local address. We will make copies and return them to you (at our cost) Our mailing address is as follows
Preston Digital Archive, 121 Broad Oak Lane, Penwortham, Preston, PR1 0XA.
Please remember to include a return address.
3. For heavier/bulky items such as postcard collection etc. one of our local volunteers may be able to pick up and collect or scan on site. Please let us know your preference. (Call us on 07733 321911)

So what are we looking for, obviously photographs form the core of our collection, images of commercial or industrial activity, lost streets and buildings, social activity and gatherings etc. We love to receive post cards, especially RP-PPC (Real Photo Picture Post Cards) Ephemera covers a broad spectrum of items and would include such items as theatre programmes, invitations, magazine articles, old advertisements and newspaper cuttings, also old church magazines.

At present the upper date range is 1990.

We also try and confine the general geographical area to Preston, Penwortham, Fulwood, Grimsargh, Walton le Dale, Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall.

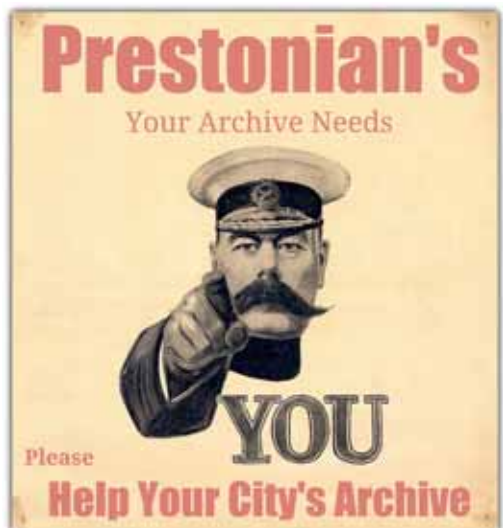
Finally we welcome any suggestions you might have for improving our archive.

You can see our archive on Flickr, to date we have received over 3,000,000 views, with an average daily count of +8000.

Thankyou for your interest and hopefully support.

Also a big thankyou to all Preston Digital Archive viewers.

Regards from Barney
Preston Digital Archive



Welcome

Welcome to the 16th issue of The Preston Magazine our free monthly magazine containing snippets of lesser-known history articles relating to Preston. We would like to wish our readers and advertisers 'A Very Happy New Year for 2014'.

A big thankyou to our advertisers, without them we could not produce this magazine. Please support them whenever you can. If you would like to help us by advertising, please do contact us.

Our thanks to Penwortham Priory Academy for their help and support in the production of our magazine. A link on their website's community pages allows you to read all issues online, as well as our sister magazines, The Penwortham Magazine and The Lostock Hall Magazine. www.priory.lancs.sch.uk you can also access The Preston Magazine via www.blogpreston.co.uk

This month's guest writers are Peter Vickers, Steve Halliwell and Mr John Davies's 'Raised in Ribbleson'. Joshua's War by Sgt. J. Kelsall, a Preston soldier's diary of action in the trenches in WW1, this month featuring the Christmas truce. Also our ongoing serial 'A Preston Lad' by Arthur Eric Crook (1917-1997). **If anyone has any family memories or photographs relating to the first world war that could feature in our magazine please do get in touch.**

Should you require a copy by post each month, please contact us. We can also email you a pdf version of the magazine.

Preston Historical Society's next meeting at Preston Minster is on Monday 3 February 'Horrockses of Preston: the Greatest name in Cotton. Speaker Dr David Hunt.

Please would you submit any memories, information or photographs that you would like to see included in the magazine. Contact details below.

The Preston flag seen on the front of the magazine was designed by **Philip Tibbets**, copyright has been waived to allow it to be used by anyone.

Take a look at the Preston groups on Flickr, there are thousands of images, old and new. **Preston Digital Archive** – recently featured in the Lancashire Evening Post - is looking for old photos of Preston and surrounding area, please get in touch at the number below if you would like to contribute. We can scan any images for you and give you a digital copy.

A copy of each issue of all the magazines is kept at Lancashire Records Office.

Front Cover Image – St Walburge's Church by Marty Hopkirk

Regards, Heather Crook

Contact Details - Heather 07733 321 911
121 Broad Oak Lane, Penwortham, Preston, PR1 0XA
Email theprestonmagazine@gmail.com

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR LOCAL ADVERTISERS

The Preston Magazine accepts no responsibility for any transactions, goods or services, entered into with or provided by advertisers within these pages. We wish to apologise if any items cause offence, they relate to times gone by, and are not necessarily the views of the editor.

Photographs from Preston's Past



Preston Market c.1950's

I have a photo taken around mid 50's of my mother, Catherine Walker, known to all as Peggy, with a customer when she used to have a chicken stall on the outdoor market in Preston. The stall, Walker's, was at Orchard Street end of the big market. My mother told me she had a stall selling flowers (which she grew herself), this was in front of the old Public Hall at bottom of Lune Street. My father worked for many years at Lancashire Evening Post and was a keen photographer and developed his own black and white photos. We lived in Hoole. Christine Taylor

Tommy Finney

There is a player down at Deepdale ground
You have to see him to believe him
He cuts right through the best defence
And scores the goal quite easy
Let the Blackpool brag about their Matthew stuff
There's Matthews, Mortenson and Johnstone
For we have the daddy of them all
And his name is Tommy Finney
He cuts through the defenders like a plough
Going through a field of clover !

Photo courtesy of Preston Digital Archive



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Articles from Preston's Past

Christmas Beef – The butchers of this town have been exerting themselves with their usual spirit to obtain the best supplies of beef, &c., for their Christmas market, and we must award them the credit of having been even more than usually successful. Connoisseurs of the good things of this life will, this morning, perceive in the Shambles and at other butcher's establishments, such a display of beef, mutton and veal, &c., as would shock vegetarians almost out of propriety. We have received particulars of immense cows, brohdignah sheep, and gigantic calves, killed by various townsmen, and fed by noted graziers in the neighbourhood, but as we can scarcely afford space for all, and it would be difficult to select a few for praise, where all are excellent, we can only congratulate those who desire prime joints for their Christmas table on the great opportunity for choice afforded to them.

Preston Chronicle December 24 1853

Christmas waits and carols – About twelve o'clock on Christmas Eve several companies of waits and carollers began to perambulate the streets, and continued to do so for a few hours. Some of the music was very good, and sounded well in the stillness of the night; one small company of carol singers had a magnificent female voice amongst them, which, in the neighbourhood of Avenham, was, during Christmas Day, the subject of much admiration amongst neighbours. But those who lay snug abed, enjoying the sweet sounds, must have pitied the performers, on account of the rain, which fell heavily nearly the whole of the night.

Preston Chronicle December 30 1854

Accidents from the frost – We regret to have to state that there have been many more or less serious accidents sustained in this town during the past week, by persons who have been called abroad by their by their business occupations or otherwise, in consequence of the slippery states of the streets. We have heard of several instances of broken limbs and severe contusions. Some of these have doubtless been occasioned by the abominable practice of slide-making upon the footpaths, and others from the snow which has fallen having been thawed from the heat of the sun during the day, and frozen again at night. The present rapid thaw and rain has again deluged our streets, and should another frost succeed before the wet has been dried up, unless some steps are taken to prevent them, many other similar accidents will, in all probability, be sustained. The remedy is a very easy one. It consists only of the use of a besom and five minutes sweeping of the snow or slush from before each door; or in the case of frost, the application of a little sand or coal ash, if the use of a spade or broom be thought to call for too great an exercise of manual labour. Strewing the path with salt is sometimes adopted, but that is a very prejudicial practice, as although it melts the ice, the remedy is even worse than the disease.

Preston Chronicle December 24 1841

The Mayor's Dole – The proceeds of Rigby's and Rushton's charities, £8, were distributed by the Mayor, on Thursday last, at the Town Hall, to upwards of 50 old people. Twenty-five of these were between seventy and eighty years of age, and twelve were above eighty. To some of the more destitute of the recipients of the dole, his worship added the gift of a pair of sheets; to some other poor persons of the town, his has kindly made a similar present, having distributed about fifty pairs.

Preston Chronicle January 5 1850

THE BLACK HORSE

166 Friargate | Orchard St | Preston | PR1 2EJ

8 Cask Ales:

Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde, XB,
Trooper, Old Tom, Cumbria Way,
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Details from David Thornton

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Two Preston Mashers

We are the two Preston Mashers,
We often go out on a spree,
We wear no tall hats and no shirts to our backs,
It's seldom we have any cash.
We always try out the new fashions,
While others they stick to the old,
And though we are just twenty-seven,
We are handsome, stout-hearted and bold.

And we sing - tra-la-la-la-la, as we walk down the street,
For style and perfection we ne'er can be beat,
All the ladies declare, that we are a treat,
We're the two Preston Mashers from down our street.

And we dance, and we sing,
And we don't care a jot, we're a jolly fine lot,
We're all right, when we're tight,
And we're jolly fine company.

Last Saturday we were invited,
To the Steamer by two ladies fair,
Their cheeks were in bloom, as the roses in June,
As we danced with that beautiful pair.
We were dancing and singing 'til midnight,
We had whisky, tobacco and rum,
Then after the dancing was over,
With those ladies we had lots of fun

.....

The other night, a couple of Preston **mashers** was taken more than was good for them of John Barleycorn's compound had just sufficient brain power left to enable them to make up their minds to victimise a local doctor. Accordingly, they waited upon the follower of Esculapius and pretended to suffer from a complexity of diseases and asked for medicine to put them all right. The doctor saw at a glance how matters stood, chuckled to himself, and made a short examination of his patients, sighing profoundly and shaking his head ominously. He then compounded a pick-me-up mixture – corpse reviver if you like – gave some practical advice and bowed his afflicted patients out. Then patients when outside laughed immoderately at so successfully 'selling' the doctor as they imagined. A few days after, however, a pretty stiff bill was sent in to each of the **mashers** for medical advice etc. When the **mashers** received the bills, it is said their countenance was as long as the street, and their nervous system indisputably in need of a pick me up. Who has the last laugh now ?

Preston Chronicle August 22 1885 (Local Chit-Chat)

*Esculapius - Latin God of Medicine, son of Apollo and Coronis

The **Preston mashers** held a meeting at their favourite hostelry during the week and decided what form their Whitsuntide amusements should take. The penny cigars smoked did not cloud their brains – that would have been an impossibility – and as a few donkeys have been seen straying on the Marsh of late, it was resolved that a fraternisation with the patient mockery would be decidedly congenial to the taste of the cultured assemblage.

Preston Chronicle May 23 1885 (Local Chit-Chat)

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**BATTY'S
ROYAL EQUESTRIAN
CIRCUS,**

From the ROYAL AMPHITHEATRE, LIVERPOOL,
Will open this day, SATURDAY, APRIL 20th, 1833.



MR. BATTY, proprietor of the Circus Royal,
(licensed pursuant to Act of Parliament,) has
the honor of making known to the public, that he
has engaged, for one week only,

*THE ROYAL CIRCUS, Chadwick's Orchard,
Preston Chronicle 20th April 1833*

The Circus is coming to town.

A story adapted by

Steve Halliwell

Most of the visiting circuses
weren't limited to just horses:
- this one was different.

Chadwick's Orchard was the site of many of Preston's visiting circuses and other forms of entertainment. It was a huge area, some of which is now occupied by the Covered Market, and was comprised of just open ground. William Batty [1801 – 1868] was an equestrian performer himself from about 1828, as well as operating the circus. He later operated Astley's Amphitheatre in London.

On this occasion in 1833, Mr. Batty's recently enlarged company of equestrians were the visitors, a company whose home was the Amphitheatre, in Liverpool. He had helped to launch a number of people's careers, such as Pablo Fanque, the versatile performer and circus proprietor – being best known today for his being mentioned in a Beatles song, "*Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite.*" William Kite worked for Fanque between 1843 and 1845. It's a small world, isn't it?

The Preston visit opened with the whole of Batty's well-known and 'highly dramatic' artists, which he pledged would be the equal of the performances in their Liverpool home (regardless of the attendant expense and inconvenience), such as the 'costly and gorgeous dresses and apparel, properties, banners, devices, arms, armour, accoutrements, trappings, decorations, and embellishments.

He claimed that his company was equal to if not superior to any in the Kingdom, including Ladies of the first talent, besides a celebrated orchestra of a MILITARY BAND, the poster boasted. He went on to invite the public to judge for themselves that they were worthy of the approval they had received, not only in the 'British Metropolis,' but in the principal cities of Europe.

The cost of the entertainment ranged from 2 shillings (10p) in the Boxes, to 1 shilling (5p) in the Pit, down to 6 pence (2½p) in the Gallery. Children under ten years were admitted at half that amount. The doors were opened at 6pm and the show began at 7pm.

Ladies and Gentlemen who wished to take advantage while Mr. Batty was in Preston, could be taught 'the polite Art of Riding,' and attended by Mr. Batty himself, and Monsieur Hangler. Furthermore, Mr. Batty offered to undertake the task of 'breaking horses in for the Field or Road.'

PRESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PROGRAMME 2013-2014

- Monday 7 October 2013 *Fishergate, Step by Step*
Speaker: Stephen Sartin
- Monday 4 November 2013 *The River Ribble as a Frontier*
Speaker: Dr Malcolm Greenhalgh
- Monday 2 December 2013 *Echos through Time – A Preston
Postcard Collection*
Speaker: Linda Barton
- Monday 6 January 2014 *Swillbrook, Syke and Swansey Gutter
Discovering Preston's Hidden Watercourses*
Speaker: Dr Alan Crosby
- Monday 3 February 2014 *Horrockses of Preston: the Greatest Name
in Cotton*
Speaker: Dr David Hunt
- Monday 3 March 2014 *'Titanic Talks'*
Speaker: Nigel Hampson
- Monday 7 April 2014 *The Lancaster Canal: Wigan to Kendal
and its Historical Impact on Preston*
Speaker: David Slater
- Monday 12 May 2014 Annual General Meeting followed by
The Films of Will Onda
Speaker: Emma Heslewood

The meetings are held in St John (The Minster),
Church Street, Preston PR1 3BU, starting at 7.15 pm

Visitors and new members are very welcome

Members £10 annual subscription.

£2.50 admission for visitors.

PLEASE COME AND JOIN US

For further information contact our Secretary, Karen Doyle
Telephone 01772 862673 or Email kd@pdprojects.co.uk

www.prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Preston Then and Now 1843-1893 -

~The changes of half a century

Probably no town in England has undergone greater mutations in its general aspects than 'Proud Preston' during the past fifty years; and it has occurred to us that some notice of the changes that have taken place within that period would be acceptable to the general public, and interesting to the younger generation of Prestonians. Our aged townspeople may thus be reminded of scenes and events long since forgotten, but now with our help remembered with varied feelings; and our younger fellow citizens may form a good idea of what the old town was like in the days of their grandfathers, and even in the youth of their parents. As most of our statements are made from memory, it is possible that we might be at fault, but we think in a few instances only.

Suppose our survey starts at Penwortham Bridge. The first noticeable novelty is the avenue of lime trees on the river side, now pretty well grown, between the bridge and the Regatta Inn. The embellishment is due to a suggestion made in the Town Council somewhere in the fifties by the late alderman George Smith (the then proprietor of the Moor Brook Mills, in Garstang-road) who died in 1868 in his 71st year. All the streets and buildings lying behind River View, in Broadgate, came rapidly into being from fifteen to twenty years ago. Among these is the Bairstow Memorial Chapel, erected in 1869, in memory of the late Mr John Bairstow, a munificent benefactor of the church, who was a partner in the celebrated firm of Horrockses, Miller and Co, long before the great Alderman Miller was connected with it. Mr Bairstow, a native of Halifax, was one of the apprentices of Mr John Horrocks, the founder of the cotton trade in Preston, and after his retirement from business he occupied many years the house in Fishergate now known as the North Western Hotel, crowning 'a youth of labour with an age of ease'. He died in 1868, aged 90 years. Looking north, from the end of Strand-road, we see the Marsh, once the common of Preston, and the playground of its youth for ages. And now the Marsh is an arid desert, covered with debris from the recent river improvements works. And we are not aware that the Corporation ever proposed or were ever requested to provide for the youth and childhood of that part of the borough a compensatory recreation ground for the loss of the Marsh. The very river in which the old inhabitant of the town bathed and boated and angled is lost to view from this point, having been diverted from its ancient course. Midway of the desert stand the Victoria Warehouses built in 1845 in anticipation of increased trade on the Ribble, a new quay having been constructed two or three years previously. Nearer, on the right stand the great aggregation of buildings and chimneys forming the unfortunate Wagons Works, erected in 1861; and the northern extremity of the Marsh is bounded by rows of shops and houses. On the hill above stands Tulketh Hall, once 'bosom'd high in tufted trees', an ancient monastery founded by Cistercian monks, who, however, soon left it and founded Furness Abbey. The old monastery is, and has long been, a private dwelling, and now denuded of all its arboreal beauty, stands in the midst of bricks and mortar and a teeming population. To the right of Tulketh Hall, stands St Walburge's Roman Catholic Church, opened in 1854, and built from the designs of Mr J A Hansom, the inventor of the cab that bears his name. It has one of the most beautiful spires in the country, which was added to the tower in 1867. The total cost of the church was about £50,000. As we ascend Fishergate Hill we find on the right, the West Lancashire Railway Station, opened about ten years ago, and on the left, the Ribble Branch Railway, completed in 1846. The mass of houses comprising South Meadow-lane, Beech-street and the neighbourhood, and the parti-coloured bricks houses of West Cliff-

road are all of quite recent erection. Those parti-coloured houses stand on ground previously cultivated as kitchen gardens, fenced from the road by a stunted and ragged hedge of thorns; and nearly opposite is the road named after the Marquis of Hartington, passing through the fields, anciently known as 'The Butts'. Just above Bow-lane on the corner of Pitt-street, the County Hall occupies a site on which stood two houses, tenanted by Dr Bowen and one of the Swainson family. The Hall, which cost about £50,000 was opened in 1882 by the Earl of Derby. By far the most noticeable of changes that have occurred during the past fifty years was the abolition of the dirty and inconvenient old railway station, and the erection of its present handsome and commodious successor, opened in 1880, and said to be the finest through station in England, save one. It is the work of Messrs. Cooper and Tullis, contractors, of this town, and cost nearly a quarter of a million. To effect this great and long desiderated change it was necessary to demolish a row of five or six stucco-fronted houses, on part of whose site now stand Harding and Co.'s Tram Carriage Office and stables in Fishergate. Those old houses took the fancy back to the days when sedan chairs were the only mode of personal conveyance in Preston. The iron palisades in front of them were provided with the means of extinguishing the torches carried by the link-boys when the occupant of the sedan chair had reached home. The extinguisher was in the form of a bell of a trumpet worked in with the iron palisades, and the torch was extinguished by being thrust therein. On the east side of the railway viaduct, and adjoining the Victoria Hotel, stood the original station of the Lancaster and Preston Railway. After its demolition and when the labourers were removing the soil in furtherance of the alterations, a terrible accident happened. A steam crane employed in the work suddenly became uncontrollable, either from subsidence of the ground or some other cause, and fell into the excavation among the navvies. Three or four of the poor fellows were either killed on the spot or were so severely crushed, burned and scalded, that they died soon afterwards. Before these operations were commenced, a large mansion, with spacious gardens in front and rear, occupied the site of the present approach to the Central Railway Station. It was formerly the residence of the Winstanley family, but soon after the formation of the Rifle Volunteer Regiment in 1859, it became their headquarters, and was so occupied until required by the railway company for the operations under notice. Before this alteration the approach to the North Union Station was a passage on the west side of the present viaduct. At the top of Butler Street, at the north-west corner stood a Railway Hotel, and a temperance hotel adjoining it, the latter being occupied by Mr John Howarth. Butler-street had then on the right, a continuous line of houses down as far as the old Lancashire and Yorkshire Station; on the left of the street, the site of the present Railway Hotel was part of a considerable area of waste ground, one which were sometimes pitched Newsome's Circus and other peripatetic devices for amusement. In providing for the erection of the present admirable station, now one of the ornaments of the town, the directors of the railway company were fortunately prevented from making an egregious blunder by the intervention of the Town Council and the sagacity and indefatigable exertions of Alderman E Birley and Mr Garlick. It was the intention of the directors to make the approach to the new station a flight of broad steps leading from Fishergate to the level of the railway platform; and their plan involved also a series of hydraulic lifts from the raising of the luggage from the platforms to the level of Fishergate, which was to be reached by some subsidiary means of transit.

To be continued

JOSHUA'S WAR (Part 3)

A Preston soldier's diary of action in the trenches of WW1

The winter is on us with a vengeance. The nights are bitter cold so that a comfortable sleep is out of the question. One wakes up through sheer pain in the feet, they get so fearfully cold. After a few minutes rubbing they begin to feel warm. Socks and boots are then put on till you wake up again through the same cause or your turn comes for 'look-out'.

The trenches are 'passable' while the hard frosts are on, but when the thaw sets in parapets seem to melt and dugouts fall in often burying their occupants. It is quite common having to dig each other out.

The re-making of parapets and dugouts is now one long nightmare – work all day, group sentry at night. The country being so level and flooded, there is no getting away from the water. Pumps are used all along the line, but it takes all our time to keep pace with the water. It is a case now of – pump out or be drowned out.

When night comes, and all manner of things are drawn from a place appointed each night by Regulations. We are to get these through the communications trench, which runs from here to a village 2 miles away. It is waist deep in parts so that sooner than risk the discomfort of a cold bath, we troop across the fields and ditches often under fire of the enemy's machine guns, when we have been discovered by their very powerful searchlights. We have lost not a few good lads through the same disobedience of orders. There was very little firing from the enemy all day the 24th December. When night fell we soon found out why. Their trench was suddenly illuminated for miles by Chinese lanterns and braziers which they placed on top. Our Xmas festivities there and then commenced. Invitations were soon flying across the 'debatable ground' to help in the 'Shifting' of the good things from home.

After a while, one of the enemy summoned up courage and came across the way, a searchlight playing on him the while. One of 'D' Company went out to meet him. They shook hands between the two lines to the accompaniment of cheers, songs, and 'War Whoops' from a Battalion on our left – the 'Bold Liensters' – a sight seen once in a lifetime. Makes a lump come sudden in a man's throat.

Thus, emboldened, both sides came out in the open now lit up by several searchlights, a weird sight. My platoon had strict orders not to move, but 'if the Germans came across, tell them to go back and please call again in the morning'. (There's no flies on our 'Skipper !).

There was little sleep as the carol singers of both sides made the most awful din. The Germans have good voices. They seem to be trained choristers. One of their chaps gave us 'For Old Times Sake' and didn't we join in the chorus. Another 'Down South in Dixie' both accompanied by a splendid cornet player. He gave us a few solos. Then more 'Hocks', 'Hurrahs', bugle calls, songs, whistling and cat-calls till daylight arrived.

After breakfast on Christmas morning, parties of men went out to help the Germans bury their dead. We challenged them to a game of football. Their officers would not consent. They gave us cigars and picture postcards. We gave them a few tins of Bully, cigarettes and other things as souvenirs. Quite a lot of them speak very good English.

One officer of ours told a German officer about the bombardment of Hartlepool and Scarborough. He could hardly believe our chaps sent his servant for the newspapers. Said he was quite disgusted. Some of these chaps had the idea that they had only the British to beat, that Paris was in their hands, that the Russian army was a thing of the past,

Zeppelins had destroyed half of London and all that rot. 'We hear of nothing but victories', said a Sergeant Major in my hearing. We let him know the facts.

They all seemed spick and span – quite a lot of rosy-cheeked youths of 18 to 20 among them – also a few with a paunch.

Noticed one officer wore a beard and spectacles. He would have looked more at home in a library. They were a Saxon regiment, 'the 139th'. They made us an offer, said they would not shoot if we refrained from doing the same. We kept the agreement till they broke it by potting one of our chaps in the leg three days afterwards. This regiment (139th Saxon) lost 1500 men in attacking us on the 18th and 21st October.

We were in these trenches 34 days being relieved about 3rd January. Our Colonel Alexander died of wounds shortly after Xmas. Our spell in the trench is now only 4 days owing to the wretched conditions obtaining there. On the 30th Jan I caught a chill after a bath. Left for treatment in England on 3rd February. Thus ends the first spasm.

Recorded by Sergeant Joshua Kelsall, Rifle Brigade, of Preston, Lancs

'Various jottings in the note book'

'For gods delight in gods
and thrust the weak aside
To him who scorns their charities
Their arms are flung open wide'

'When the old world is sterile
And the ages are effete,
He will from wrecks and sediments
A fairer world complete'

'Spring still makes Spring in the mind,
When sixty years are told;
Love wakes anew this throbbing heart
And we are never old'.

'When the forest shall mislead me,
When the night and morning lie,
When sea and land refuses to feed me,
Twill be time enough to die.

Then will yet my mother yield,
A pillow on her greenest field,
Nor June flowers scorn to couch,
The clay of their departed lover.

Woodnotes

*(Applicable to Dad, shot Sept, 5th, 1920)

These short impromptu truces, which occurred at intervals during the war, were sternly dealt with by the High Command. .

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Raised in Ribbleton

From Lambert Road I attended Ribbleton Avenue Council School, known as the little school, from the age of four. The school had only just opened and on my first day my Granny took me to the tram stop at the cemetery gates at the top of Stuart Road and accompanied me on the tram to the school. The first people we met at the tram stop were Harry (Bud) Attwater and his mother. Bud and I were the best of friends until he died in about 2001.

The school was pleasant apart from the occasional ruler applied to the hand and in the first year in the baby class as it was called, we were put to bed in the afternoon.

Very soon I was meeting the tram on my own as were other children and given tuppence for the fare. As we got older the tuppence was spent on sweets and we walked until my Grandparents found out and decided that we did not therefore need the tuppence. Not only did we walk to and from school morning and afternoon but we walked home and back for dinner too. Walking was both a pleasure and a hazard. We played marbles in the gutter and other games as they came into season but we never walked alone if we could help it. The Catholics kids from Blessed Sacrament had to walk in the opposite direction on the other side of the road and you never crossed over for fear of a beating. It did happen. The Catholic Bulldogs as they described themselves jeered at us Protestant Pigs as they called us. There was great bitterness between the two religions and not only amongst the children !

I left the little school aged seven and went to the big school next door. This was Ribbleton Avenue Methodist School. From the start at seven years we occasionally had to assemble in the hall and listen to a visiting lecturer on the evils of drink. I remember one pouring whisky out of a bottle onto a saucer and lighting it with the instruction 'Do that to your father's whisky and show him what fiery stuff he is drinking !' God help the lad who tried it. The other noticeable thing in assembly was, looking at the heads of the lads in front, many had bald circles in their hair, ringworm.

By and large the teachers were good but the deputy headmaster was a bully. The lessons were made quite interesting. Once a teacher brought in a sheep's eye and under her guidance we dissected it. Next week it was a pair of sheep's lungs. How strange for a class of eight to nine year olds but I still remember all the details of them.

We played all the usual playground games, marbles, top and whip, conkers and piggy, which involved hitting a piece of wood pointed at both ends from the floor with a stick and when it was in the air belting it as far as you could with the same stick !

Neil Baxter, one of the boys picked on me continually. Today it would be called bullying but then we didn't know the word. He did nothing very bad, just aggravated me. In class we sat in double desks and one day he kept leaning sideways and pushing his head over my book stopping me from working. In a fit of rage I banged my fist down on the back of his head and it hit the desk hard. His nose burst and my exercise book was soaked with his blood. We both got the stick from the teacher and although we were never the best of friends he never bothered me again.

Groups of us kids used to wander miles in the countryside on our own and never came to any harm although Grandad had warned us to be careful when playing on the railway line of 'bad men'. A test of one's courage was to walk through 'cat's tunnel'. This was a tunnel which carried Savick Brook from Greenlands tip under the railway. It was named because of a cat's face carved in the stonework in the middle of the tunnel. Of course, to see it one had to walk through the water, which could be quite deep after a period of heavy rain. The evening in 1935 before we left Strawberry Cottage and moved to Ribbleton Hall

Drive, Bud and myself walked along the path at the side of the brook, past Cromwell Road and came across some lads who had made a raft out of timber and oil drums which they sailed in a pit. We joined them and were invited to have a go. We each went across singly then Bud decided it would carry two. So we set off but capsized in the middle of the pit. I vividly remember looking up to see faint daylight through muddy brown water. I don't know whether Bud could swim but I certainly couldn't. However, the lads pushed a pole out which, as I rose to the surface, I grabbed but it was full of nails. Still, cut hands were better than drowning. My grandparents' wrath – every thing was packed for moving in the morning – was tempered by the fact that I was alive although they must have been worried because of the impact of a similar event on my father. I was dried and put to bed but soon Bud's father called to see how I was but it emerged that Bud had said we were walking by the stream and I had slipped and dragged him in. I had told the same tale but that Bud had slipped. He got a good hiding because in his shirt pocket was some of his Dad's throat sweets – he was in the Parish choir – of course these had dissolved and ruined his shirt.

When I was seven or eight because my grandfather was ill I was sent to live with my mother at Hale Barns on two occasions each for about two weeks. There I attended the village school which was one room divided by a moveable partition with a teacher teaching a different subject in each half. It took all age groups and it was difficult at times to listen to your own teacher because of the noise made from the other side of the partition. I never made any friends there; I suppose it was to be expected. I was an outsider come to an established company.

Ribbleton Hall Drive was then in the country. The Hall and Farm were still there and I recall helping with the haymaking in the field where Ribbleton Hall High School now stands. We used to play in Ribbleton Hall very precariously because of its state of repair. During the war the Hall was occupied by the army, Royal Army Service Corps I believe. During their stay a girl was shot one night. Of course she shouldn't have been there but I

don't think she was killed. I didn't live there long though I do remember building with new friends I had made, a large bonfire for November 5th on the spare ground between the house of Ribbleton Hall Drive and the Ribbleton Hall Crescent and a cul-de-sac off the road. The Hall Lodge to the Hall existed then, where the library is now, and was occupied. That was the only building on that side of Ribbleton Hall Drive.

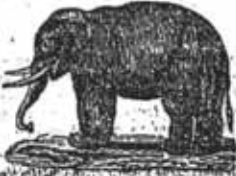


About Easter of 1936 I was sent to live permanently with my mother and stepfather in Urmston but at the start of 1937 I was sent to boarding school in Derbyshire, although I always returned to Ribbleton for the holidays. I left school in June 1941 and started work at Marsden's in Church Street but that's the story you already know.

Written by John Davies

Mr Wombwell's Menagerie

We perhaps take for granted the wonderful access we have to see and study "wild animals" that we enjoy in our lifetimes through the media of films and television. In the 19th Century very few people had access even to books and to satisfy their curiosity they had to see animals "in the flesh". As regular readers may have noted from the contents of Pablo Fanque's bill of fare in the recent edition of the magazine, the travelling circus proprietors at this time tended to restrict their presentations to acrobats and horses and did not include such acts as lion tamers, this was to come later. This gave opportunity for enterprising showmen to travel the country with a menagerie of animals from around the world, making a decent living and satisfying the curiosity of the populace. Such a man was George Wombwell, born on Essex in 1777, moved to London around 1800 where he worked as a shoemaker until 1810 when he had accumulated enough exotic animals to form Wombwell's Travelling Menagerie.



Wombwell's Royal National Menagerie.
The last day of the Menagerie being exhibited in Preston!

MR. GEORGE WOMBWELL,
IN acknowledgement of the flattering support and patronage he has received from the Nobility, Gentry, and the Public of Preston and its vicinity since the arrival and opening of his Superior MENAGERIE, in Chadwick's Orchard, respectfully offers his most sincere thanks, and trusts that during the stay of his collection in Preston, he shall still merit a share of their favours.

Mr. G. W. invites the attention of the public to his extensive collection immediately, as by previous arrangements the Menagerie must be exhibited in other towns, after this day, Saturday April 27th, 1839.

The first mention of the menagerie being in the Preston area was when, in September 1822, it was part of the entertainment at the Guild. *The Preston Chronicle* carried a number of dramatic stories relating to his menagerie. Twice in 1831 men were attacked and mauled by a tiger and a lion respectively; in 1832 six box cars were used to transport the animals and living quarters by rail from Liverpool to Manchester which had opened as recently as September 1830. It was custom to move from town to town by road, staying for just one day at smaller villages and for several at larger towns. This could prove hazardous as in

May 1834; there are reports of wagons breaking down between Newton and Kirkham and again between Kirkham and Garstang. Further lurid reports appeared in *The Chronicle*: at Barnsley a curious dog was dragged into a lion's cage and a tiger trapped a man against the cage rails in Carlisle. Mr Wombwell offered his collection for inspection on *The Orchard* in April 1839 attracting both curious members of the public and no doubt a proportion of thrill seekers. An element of what was to become part of the circus was introduced by this time and in September 1846 one Mrs. King was billed as the "Lion Queen". It was part of the presentation that she entered the cage of the big cats and got them to perform to her commands. All went well until, when they were in Lymn, she upset the tiger which resulted in an unscheduled scrap between the lions and tigers from which she was fortunate to emerge with nothing more serious than "a bite on the bottom". Shortly after this Mr Wombwell visited Preston once again, in April 1847. Mrs King, it seems, had had enough and shortly afterwards left to set up a more secure home with a member of the brass band that accompanied every appearance of the menagerie. It was a little later that same year that Wombwell's Menagerie gained royal patronage when Queen Victoria took her children to

visit when the menagerie called at Windsor in November 1847. Miss Chapman was now "The Lion Queen" but The Queen commanded that she did not enter the lion's cage on this occasion. The number and types animals had continued to expand and now included lion cubs, the first bred in captivity in England, in addition to the elephants, giraffes, a gorilla, a hyena, kangaroo, leopards, six lions, llamas, monkeys, ocelots, onagers, ostriches, panthers, a rhino (African unicorn), three tigers, wildcats and zebras and "birds and reptiles from every part of the globe". Following such royal attention it would seem reasonable to hope that things might have reached a higher plane but tragedy was to follow. Firstly, in June 1849, Mr Wombwell's son was gored by an elephant then, in January 1850, his niece Ellen Bright who had been the "Lion Queen" for about a year was killed by a single blow from a tiger. Perhaps this was too much for Mr Wombwell as in November 1850, whilst resting in his stately bed-carriage, with the brass band playing at its full height he died. The band switched to "The Dead March in Saul", the show closed for the day and his body was transported by train to London where he was buried at Highgate Cemetery. His coffin was made of wood from the

ship "The Royal George" that had been given to him by Prince Albert and his grave is surmounted by a wonderful statue of his favourite lion "Nero". After George's death the management was carried on by Mr Edmonds, who had become George Wombwell's son in law, with some input from Mrs Wombwell. Other family members were to travel using the Wombwell name however, for our brief look at the menagerie world we will follow the one that continued to visit Preston and was, by 1856, "The Largest in Europe, The Royal Windsor Castle Menagerie". The parade into each town now consisted of some fifteen large carriages preceded by the brass band. It is



interesting to note that the charges for admission were one shilling for working classes and sixpence for children; the rich don't talk about money? In 1857, an extraordinary fight took place between a lion and a tiger that were being transported in ordinary railway compartments when the tiger managed to slide open the dividing doors. The ensuing battle resulted in a victory for the tiger leaving Mr Edmonds some £400 worse off. Later, in 1873, there was a move to separate the patrons by charging one and sixpence for ladies and gentlemen, one shilling for children and servants and after 6pm, sixpence for children and labouring classes. Miss Harriet Edmonds had taken over the management by 1873 when the places visited included Preston, Longridge, Hurst Green and Clitheroe. In March 1884 the farewell tour was announced and in August 1884 all the properties were sold. *The Preston Chronicle* commented that "It is like hearing of the death of an old friend to receive the news of the sale by auction of Wombwell's Menagerie. The name that reminds us of days when we were first introduced, partly by way of amusement, and partly also by way of instruction, to the wonders of animated nature, - days when we regarded "Wombwell's" as an awful and important public institution, hardly less sacred than Parliament."

Pete Vickers



A Preston Lad by Arthur Eric Crook

Home for Boys, Ivy Bank, Brockholes View, Preston during the late 1920's

The most demoralising thing that ever happened to me at school concerned a female. Our playground was a cobbled space, school buildings on one side, two sides factory walls and the fourth the wall that divided the girls and infants playground from the boys. Boys downstairs and girls upstairs. At playtime, the lasses sat at the windows and looked down at us boys at play. Of course, we showed off a bit, and the girls would clap at our prowess at whatever we were doing. Pretending to fight each other, jumping furthest, standing on our hands etc. I fancied one girl, although I had never spoken to her. Surprise, Surprise ! One day I received a letter from her. It was some romantic verse. I forget what, just some silly, soppy thing that girls write, I suppose a dare. Anyway, I was chuffed, fancy skinny me ! I wasn't that well built, but she, **Marion Osbourne** fancied me. Marion was chubby, had a bonny face and wore short frocks, which always showed her pants, salmon pink the same as her frock, fattish legs with galoshers on. I used to walk home behind her mouthing nonsensical and trite utterances, if she giggled I felt quite the lad. Anyway she had written this missive and it had been duly delivered by another girl to another boy and given to me. I could hardly eat my dinner till Miss Hall said, 'No pudding, Crook, unless you clean your plate', which brought me back down to earth. After dinner I showed it **Duggie Huxley**, two heads were better than one, on this sort of business. I think Duggie was a bit jealous because he nattered on about him only wanting her friend in the reply. Sod off,, I said, I wanted to reply in similar vein. The upshot was we decided to do the usual 'Roses are red, Violets are blue' bit, I can't remember what tripe I wrote, but it was lovey-dovey. Paper was produced, pencil found, and it was written down in the cellar as we washed ourselves, then folded up in a manner that it stayed closed and 'To Marion' written on the front. I left Duggie to the cloak and dagger stuff required to get it to its recipient. Marion duly read it I suppose, showed it to her friends, but there was a traitor in the camp, **Matty Hall**, a scruffy, black haired girl, who went and told the headmistress, Miss McGraw. The next thing I knew **Daddy Brown** called me to his desk and showed me the note I had written. 'Never put pen to paper Crook, in affairs of the heart' he said. He treated it as a joke, laughing whilst he talked to me.

'Still something has to be done McGraw wants to see you upstairs'. I was aghast. Go upstairs and walk past two classes of girls to reach the headmistress's desk. 'I can't do that, Sir' I stuttered. 'You can and you will I'm afraid not my decision **Miss McGraw** insists you go upstairs'. 'Can't you cane me Sir ?' I pleaded. 'Fraid not lad, off you go'. I went out of the class and stood at the bottom of the stone steps that led to the girls domicile, eventually I reached the top and knocked. A girl answered the door with an inquiring 'Yes ?' 'I've got to see Miss McGraw' I said hoarsely. 'Just a minute' she said, 'I'll go and tell her'. I think she must have flew she was back in no time. 'Miss McGraw says Come in'. Please let me die God and be a martyr ! I tiptoed so my clogs wouldn't make a noise on the wooden floor. About fifty thousand heads turned to look, well at least about sixty. Two classes with the headmistress's desk midway between the two sets of girls. My face was as red as a fire, I stood in front of this awesome woman and thought she is worse than **Miss Hall**. She looked at me for a long minute then said, 'This is your handwriting, I presume ?' 'Yes Miss' I whispered. She wanted to know my full name and age and where my parents lived. I told her I was at the orphanage. 'Oh, you're a Home lad are you, I wonder if I should inform whoever is in charge, I could send it via one of the Home girls' 'Please don't it was only a bit of fun' I begged. 'Bit of fun, bit of fun' she said raising her voice and I suppose sixty pens stayed poised in mid air awaiting the next

words. 'You are here to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest, and if you want to worship anyone, do it in church !' Had I waxed that sentiment that I had written about worshipping her. 'And if you feel lyrically bent, write about something more mundane'. I wondered what 'mundane' meant. 'Anyway young man we will overlook the deviation of the rules this once and save your sentiments till you leave school, off you go and tell Mr Brown that six of the best won't come amiss'. Thankfully I retraced my steps past all those laughing eyes of Miss McGraw's pupils, the palms of my hands were wet through and I hoped I would never have to endure such a harrowing experience ever again. The boys in my class said I deserved a VC. Daddy Brown didn't cane me, to him it was a bit of a laugh. Maybe he had indulged in such fripperies when he had been my age. Needless to say at playtime there were quite a few grinning faces at the upstairs window whenever I looked up. Marion didn't appear for a couple of weeks and was of rather sober countenance for a while. Meanwhile things at the orphanage carried on in its monotonous manner.

I once had company in my lone bedroom. A retarded boy was mistakenly sent to the Home. He was about eight, constantly slavered, could not read or write, could not speak even. He made inarticulate noises and cried himself to sleep the biggest part of the night. The only sentence he could say was 'An chiddy beaukeps, sebberdetts'. Which he repeated over and over again, when he was not biting the division between his thumb and forefinger. His name was **Dennis Hetchells**. Miss Hall sent him to school, but of course it was a waste of time. Thankfully he only stayed a few weeks, poor lad needed hospitalising. He had a very large forehead. Miss Hall said he had water on the brain. It was a relief for me when he went. At night I tried to comfort him at first, but he did not respond, and I found myself shouting at him, which to an older person would have been unwarranted. At twelve years of age or so, one accepts that being healthy, sane and fit and capable of understanding what the difference between right and wrong is, part of the norm, and we don't realise that having all these attributes we are so lucky and how thankful we should be.

Miss Hall never had a good word for anyone who partook of the demon drink. She told us tales about drunken husbands who cause a lot of suffering to their wives and children. At times she kept us hours listening to tales about Manchester Road, Library Street, back of the old church and the shady denizens who lived there, starving kids, drunken dads, loose women and the flea bitten hovels they live in. I suppose she had a point at least we were fed, plain fare of course but well nourished, a clean bed and clean clothes and if we were not god fearing we ought to have been. Loose women, who she so often told us about brings about the memory of my first sighting of a lady of the night, or to be more correct in this case, Saturday dinnertime. Me and a couple of lads were taking a short cut through one of the rougher areas of Avenham. We were strolling through a back alley chattering as young boys do and kicking a stone backwards and forwards amongst ourselves, when we noticed one of the back gates ajar, and there leaning over the adjoining wall with a fag in one hand and another shoving chips into her mouth from out of a newspaper was a rough looking tart with her frock hoisted up. One gent was buttoning up his trousers and another eager soul stepping forward to take his turn, she was talking to another woman over the wall all the time this was taking place apparently oblivious to the act she was mentally disengaged from. She saw us all staring wide eyes and yelled 'Be off before I charge you for watching you dirty little buggers !' We ran like the wind and didn't look back till we were two streets away.

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