

# The Lostock Hall Magazine

Issue 7  
June 2013

**Mr Albert Twist**  
**Tardy Gate Girl**  
**Todd Lane Junction**

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Welcome to the June (7th) issue of The Lostock Hall Magazine, which also covers Tardy Gate and nearby parts of Farington. It is a collection of local history articles relating to the area.

Our thanks to Penwortham Priory Academy who support us by printing and formatting the magazine.

A copy of each issue will be kept in the Lancashire Records Office.

Jackie Stuart has kindly allowed us to serialise her book entitled 'A Tardy Gate Girl'.

This month Ray Cartwright, has again written for us about his memories of Tardy Gate in the 1940's, and he has kindly submitted articles for future editions. Many thanks to Mr Brian Whittle. Thanks to Bob Gregson for his article on Todd Lane Station taken from his book 'Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway around Preston' and everyone who has sent in comments or photos.

I would like any one who would like to contribute their memories of childhood, mill, railway, or about their business, club or group, or any other subjects, or any information and photographs, to please get in touch with me. You can write, email or contact me by phone. Especially older memories which might get lost in time. If anyone would like to write down the memories of their older relations I would really appreciate it. Or contact me and I will be happy to meet with anyone who has memories to share. Thankyou everyone for reading the magazine.

We are able to produce this magazine by the support of the advertisers, who you will find among our pages – please do support them and tell them you saw them in The Lostock Hall magazine. We appreciate their support because without them we would be unable to produce it.

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**The Lostock Hall Market is on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June from 10 till 3**

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Front Cover image by The Lostock Hall Magazine

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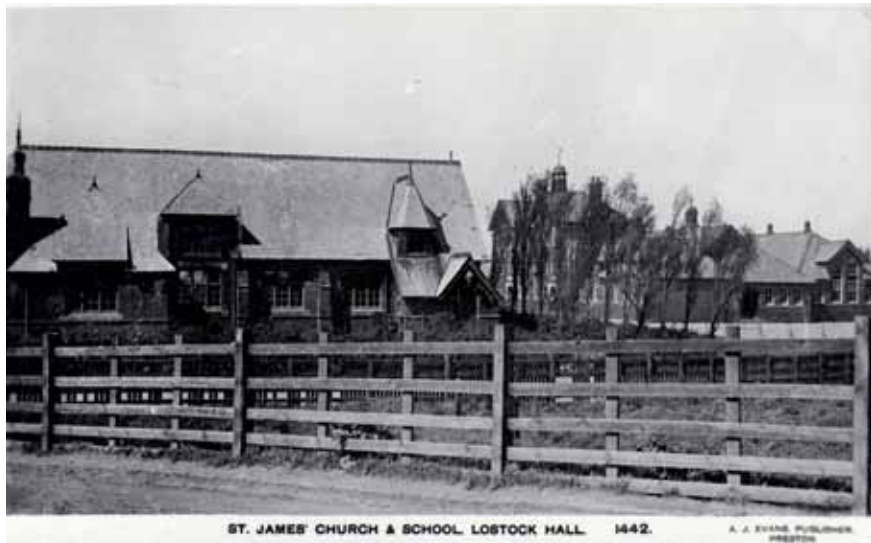
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## Old Lostock Hall Photographs



**Lostock Hall Council School, Woodwork Class, 1946 (ish)  
Mr Cearns (Sam Plank) is the teacher.  
Photo courtesy of Ray Cartwright.**



**ST. JAMES' CHURCH & SCHOOL, LOSTOCK HALL. 1442.**

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**St James Church and School, Lostock Hall  
Photo courtesy of Marina McNulty**

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## LOSTOCK HALL FOOTBALL

The accounts of the village brings back so many happy memories. I personally used to watch Ray Cartwright play football at left half for St Gerards, and later had the pleasure of playing with the late Les Dagger at Southport F.C. Tony and Avril Jackson.

Issue 6, Lostock Hall FC, the goalkeeper back row right in John McCall, he lived in a terraced house in Ward Street. I played in later years with him for Leyland St Ambrose, we played on Worden Park. Brian Forrey (deceased) and Jeff Randall (Australia) also played. Derek Nicholls

## H.M.S. CHASER

I was very surprised to see a picture of H.M.S. Chaser in the Lostock Hall Magazine, Issue 6. I sailed in her from Sydney to Hong Kong in February, 1946. Built to U.S. Navy standards she was a revelation to us Brits. Along with many others I was merely taking passage to join another ship. We lived and slept in rows of mess tables and bunks on the hangar deck immediately below the flight deck but for American crews she was equipped with every comfort. There was even a soft drinks dispenser on the hangar deck, what the Americans call a 'gofor' bar. Needless to say it wasn't working for us. We ate off stainless steel trays partitioned for each part of the meal. We didn't wash up merely took the trays down to the galley and they were washed there. Automatically ?. The lavatories ('heads' in naval parlance) were sited on a sponson on the outside of the hull at hangar deck level. There were cubicles but no bowls just a stainless steel trough which ran underneath the seats from front to back flowing with sea water which carried away all the effluent and dropped it in the sea. A great prank was to light a screw of paper and float it along underneath all the occupants. I think the journey only took about a fortnight but we played a lot of hockey on the flight deck. Not good for the shins on a rolling deck.

On arrival at Hong Kong I joined H.M.S. Ariadne, a fast minelayer, for a trip to Kure, Japan. That was a most distressing sight. Only what I believe was the telephone exchange was standing, all the homes were flat. Families lived by the side of the road under propped up sheets of corrugated iron. The lucky ones had found wooden packing cases. A wooden hut had been built as a fleet club serving beer but as we sailed out at night it was ablaze astern. Who caused the conflagration I do not know, careless Brits or Japanese ?

From Kure we ferried Chinese refugees (or prisoners?) to Shanghai. Thence back to H.K. The ship was going home then but I was not due to return so I was drafted into the Base Radio Workshop in the dockyard for nine months living in the China Fleet Club. The experience gained there set me up in a wonderfully interesting career. From John Davies, Penwortham.

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**A new railway route** – The London and North Western and the Lancashire and Yorkshire Companies will this week jointly open a new route for the carriage of goods between Liverpool and West Lancashire, and Yorkshire and the eastern counties. Hitherto all traffic between these points has had to be transferred at Preston goods yard, but when the new route is opened Preston will be altogether relieved of the transfer traffic. Near the Farington Station, on the London and North Western Company's main line, is an old curve, about a mile in length, which in the days of the first Preston and Blackburn railway formed the entrance to Preston. This curve, which has been disused over a score of years, ends near the Lostock Hall station on the Lancashire and Yorkshire line, from Liverpool to Preston, so that under the new arrangement goods will be transferred at Farington and Lostock Hall respectively, instead of going on in each case to Preston. To facilitate this arrangement, which is expected to save much time and labour, about ten miles of sidings have been laid down at Farington. The line will be worked by the joint companies.

**Preston Chronicle April 17 1886**

**Lostock Hall v. Livesey Grasshoppers** This match was played on the ground of the former on Saturday in the presence of a fair number of spectators. Lostock Hall suffered through the absence of Spencer. During the first half Lostock had much the best of the game, and at half time the score was Lostock Hall two goals, Livesey one. After the change of ends Dixon was not long before he added a third point for the home team, and shortly afterwards, from a free kick, Robinson headed the ball through his own goal, thus making the second point for the visitors. Encouraged by this splice of luck the Grasshoppers played with great energy, and pressed the home team for a little time, but the defence was grand, especially that of the half-backs. Turner in particular being very busy. Just before time Horsefield for the Grasshoppers, made a fine run, and finished up with a stinging shot, but Smalley turned it over the bar, nothing resulting from the corner. Amidst great excitement time was called – the game standing Lostock Hall three goals, Livesey Grasshoppers two goals.

**The Blackburn Standard November 6<sup>th</sup> 1886**

**Lecture on The Ribble**

On Monday evening an interesting lecture was delivered in the Cuerdale Green Sunday School, Lostock Hall by **Mr F Mattinson**, FEIS FSS. There was a good attendance, the audience being of a most intelligent class. In the course of his remarks the lecturer referred to the facilities afforded by the Ribble Committee is permitting people to visit the Dock works. In answer to a question by the Chairman, the lecturer expressed the opinion 'that such of the hard marl now being taken out the bed of the river which has not been exposed to the direct action of the atmosphere or other deteriorating influences' would endure, and is therefore eligible and suitable material to be used in the construction of the training walls &c.

**Preston Chronicle November 19<sup>th</sup> 1887**

**Strike of Weavers** – The turn-out of weavers who were employed at the Lostock Hall Mill, near Preston, is not yet settled. The operatives allege that they were required to get as much work of the new looms, although it is notorious that all new machinery works stiff. There is no prospect now of the dispute being amicably settled, as a great number of hands – it is said about one-half of them, have obtained work at other places, and that others have gone to Blackburn, Burnley and Preston, taking their families with them. Lostock is now a deserted village, though hitherto it has been more than ordinarily prosperous, this being the first strike in the place for 25 years.

**Liverpool Mercury July 20<sup>th</sup> 1888**





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## News of the World Bowling Tournament

Who remembers 'The News of the World Bowling Tournament held at the Railway Hotel between 1948 and 1954. The prize money for the winner in 1954 was £250, a lot of money then. The entrance fee to the competition was 2/6. On Final Day there was anywhere from 300 plus spectators. The landlord was Mr Harry Ward.

The winners

1948	GEORGE SOUTHWORTH (PUM)	EUXTON
1949	W. COOK	BOLTON
1950	TOMMY FREEMAN	WIGAN
1951	H. THOMPSON (LOL)	ST HELENS
1952	HARRY RUTTER	WIGAN
1953	JERRY CORNWELL	CHORLEY
1954	BILLY CHORLTON	BILLINGE

- From 1955 the tournament was held on the bowling green at Hartington Road, the Empire Services Club.
- Two local bowlers did very well in the competition.
- Billy Wiggans – He got beat on Finals Day in 1948, in the last eight. Danny Patience who got beat on the Friday night before Finals Day. Time Last '16'. He lived in Ward Street and Billy Wiggans lived in Wateringpool Lane.

By Brian Whittle



*'Harry Ward, top right, in the Railway Hotel.  
Photo courtesy of Marina McNulty*

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## Harry Wilson and the Arctic Convoys

As reported in last month's issue Harry Wilson took part in the Arctic Convoys during the Second World War. Harry was born in Preston in 1922 and lived in St Pauls Road along with his siblings. The family attended St. Ignatius's School and Church. All of his brothers had gone into the services, RAF signals, Royal Artillery, Chindits in the Burma 8<sup>th</sup> Army and the Royal Navy, also three of his mates were in the Royal Navy, so Harry volunteered. He went along to Preston Labour Exchange in



Pole Street and was sent to do his gunnery training at the gunnery school at HMS Raleigh, where they were trained to use Twin Orlinakan 20mm. There were eight Preston lads, names I remember Eric Nightingale, Alec Nixon, Ginger Wignall and Joe Morton. He went from HMS Drake to Greenoch, then across to America on the Queen Elizabeth, which had been commandeered by the Americans as a troop ship. They were to pick up a ship which unfortunately broke its back when launched. They were sent to an American Service Camp in Passegula where the Yanks looked after them – they had everything – no rationing. After they were on a fleet carrier transporting aircraft in the Pacific. Eventually ended up back in the UK to take part in the convoys from Scotland to Murmansk, Russia, taking war materials, tanks and guns.

Winston Churchill once described the route the convoys took as 'the worst journey in the world'. They were perilous missions in sub-zero temperatures the crews risked their lives when they came under enemy fire for if you were torpedoed you could not have lived much longer than five minutes in the water. Many fine ships were lost with their cargoes of tanks, guns and ammunition and hundreds of very brave men.

'It was the experience of our lives, met good pals and friends, there was never any trouble on board. The only one I ever saw after we were demobbed was Eric Nightingale coming home down Dover Street. He ended up as a Chief Petty Officer, his uncle Tommy Roberts played centre forward for PNE.

The weather was atrocious, the ship was up and down with waves coming over. There were times when you thought you would not make it. We knew the U boats were out there. 60 foot high waves, frozen to the bone, sleepless nights and terror ridden days, frozen decks, ice cold water, dense fog all to be endured. Which was worse the summer or winter I do not know. In the winter the dark nights lasted from mid afternoon to mid morning, this did help protect us against enemy aircraft and U boats. The cold was unbelievable, the spray froze on the guns and guard rails, forming blocks of ice which had to be chopped off with axes each day to prevent the ship from becoming top heavy. Your breath would freeze against your balaclava helmet and even your hair underneath it. Below decks it was extremely cold, neither electric fires or insulation of long johns and several layers of sweaters seemed to make much difference. We went to bed fully dressed, it was the warmest place to be, but hell getting up again. In summer the light was almost round the clock and from the moment the first enemy aircraft sighted a convoy its crews knew there would be little it could do. Bombers, torpedo planes and U boats attacked convoys in waves. All looking to obliterate our precious cargoes, and us! Being on an



aircraft carrier we had to sail out of convoy to let them off the aircraft. That was a bit scary. On one run a submarine came between us and the convoy, luckily nothing happened.

Another time six U boats got into the convoy and all the ships had to scatter, after a long wait, again luckily, no harm was done. One time we picked up survivors from HMS Mahratta and fetched them home on the HMS Chaser'

In 1985 the Democratic Union of Russian States this Russian government under Mikhail Gorbachev sent medals to all naval seamen who took part in the to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russians convoys. The Russian 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Great Patriotic War Medal (generally known as The Russian Convoy Medal) Ten years later in 1995 President Putin's government did the same.

Harry is now waiting to receive a medal, the Arctic Star, from the British authorities for his part in the campaign. The survivors of the convoys have waited seven decades to receive this medal for their bravery, suffering and loss.

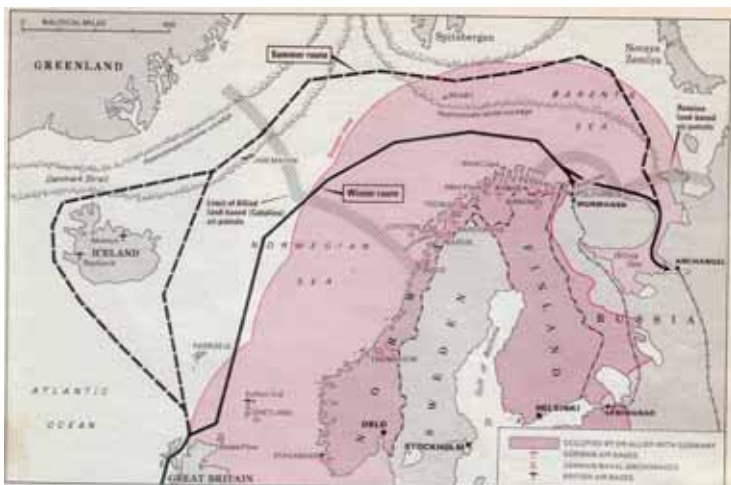
The Russian Convoy Club in Preston was first at the 55<sup>th</sup> Division Club, then at the RAF Club, East View, and later at Acregate Labour Club, now it is in Blackpool.

### **HMS CHASER**

Escort Aircraft Carrier obtained under US/UK Lend Lease Agreement. The ship was under construction at Pascagoula, Mississippi, by Ingalls and had been laid down on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1941 for mercantile use as ss Mormacgulf. She was launched on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1942 after being requisitioned by the US navy on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1941 for conversion as an Auxillary Aircraft Carrier (CVE) to be named USS BRETON (AVG) She was later selected with nine others of this class for transfer to the Royal Navy. Design changes were made based on the experience gained on the earlier Archer Class, including a large hangar. The propulsion machinery consisted of two steam turbines driving a single shaft, as compared with the diesel engine of used for previous ships. Build included the fitting of British radar outfits and was completed on 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1943, when the ship was formally transferred to the RN as HMS CHASER. She was the second RN ship to carry this name which was first used in 1871 for a Sloop which was sold three years later.

**Arctic Convoys of World War Two** were ocean going convoys which sailed from the United Kingdom, Iceland and North America to northern ports in the Soviet Union – primarily Archangel and Murmansk, both in modern day Russia. There were 78 convoys between August 1941 and May 1945, sailing via several seas of the Atlantic and Arctic Oceans.

About 1400 merchant ships delivered vital supplies to the Soviet Union, under the Lend-Lease program, escorted by ships of the Royal Navy, Royal Canadian Navy and the US Navy. Eighty five merchant vessels and 16 Royal Navy warships, (two cruisers, six destroyers, eight other escort ships) were lost.





## War Time Happenings and Reminiscences

Donkeyman (engine room) Joe Cartwright Merchant Navy. 'That was my Dad' in the Second World War. Serving on lots of famous ships including both the Queen Mary and Elizabeth. On one voyage his ship was torpedoed by a German submarine and he was in an open life boat for two or three days, before being picked up by another Merchant ship, this in turn was attacked from the air but survived. When he eventually got home there was no hero's welcome, he was just classed as unemployed with no pay and was off again on another ship within weeks. In the First World War he was a private soldier in one of the Liverpool Infantry Regiments serving in France in the trenches, both at Ypres and the Somme where he was both gassed and wounded. 'What a survivor'.

Tardy Gate was an exciting place to be during the war years, with always something going on, it was one of the most intensively bombed small villages in the Preston area. What with the tragedy of twenty five being killed in Ward Street on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 1940 at 16-30 hrs. It's one of my most vivid memories even though I was only eight at the time I can still see that German aircraft swooping over the Tardy Gate wreck, diving. It seemed to be coming right at us, before turning and delivering its deadly load on to Ward Street. I was with my elder sister and younger brother playing on the swinging horse. No wonder its still so vivid in my memory. The other heavy bombing raid sometime in 1942, but by the grace of God did not result in any fatalities, was when two high explosive bombs dropped, one in Farington Endowed School field, the other destroying the Ridings family home in School Lane. Talking to Stan Rudman who was a pupil at the time at Farington School he remembers the disgust of his fellow pupils, when they still had to go into school the next day, even though there was but a big bomb crater in the school field. The explosion from the bombs caused quite a lot of structural damage in the surrounding area. One of the tales being that Stanley Fold farm where John Wildings family lived, lost a big part of its roof, and as a result the Wilding family had to evacuate to relations in Kellet Lane Bamber Bridge for the duration of the war. John's mother was expecting him at the time; this means that John is really a Brigger !

Incendiary bombs were always a menace as St Gerards Church found out in May 1942 when a string of them were dropped in a line starting on Tardy Gate wreck, hitting the end house in Meadow Street, which was Toppings. One of our two local coal merchants lived there, onto St Gerards Church and up Brownedge Road. There was quite a spread of incendiaries dropped, some hit St Gerrards Avenue others hit properties in Wateringpool Lane. This is certainly a good instance where it shows that the advanced training everyone got on how to deal with incendiary bombs came to fruition, this really saved the Church from burning down.

There were lots of local schemes to help survive during this period of food, clothing and fuel rationing. One or two that come to mind are the way we got extra eggs by supplying Joe Higham known to everyone as 'Joe Egg' the local poultry farmer with any scraps of food left from the table. His farm called Model House Farm was at the far end of the recreation ground running the full length of the field, a really large producer of free range eggs he used to leave a 45 gallon open drum at the edge of the field to receive the scraps. Another instance on how to cope was when we were short of coal it was the done thing to go to the gas works road coke picking, the large fully loaded wagons used to swerve so that any excess would fall off. Some days there were literally dozens of people gathering coke.

Another sad happening was the death of an American serviceman in the underground shelter, he had a liaison with a local girl, when he leaned on a live electric switch and was



electrocuted. Happier times with regard to the American occupation of Bamber Bridge was when all the schoolchildren of serving men in the forces were invited to a Christmas party on the base. They were picked up in big army wagons, from all the schools in the area and transported to the American Army Camp Canteen. What a spread they laid on, actually tasting things such as ice cream etc. This was a first for some of the children. 'A nice time'. I hope some of you have enjoyed my reminiscences, but now there is a bowling green to look after.

**T.T.F.N. Ray Cartwright.**

### **The Ribble Exercise Group**

Anyone who is a recovering cardiac patient within this surrounding area of South Ribble might be interested to know that there is a totally voluntary organisation called 'The Ribble Exercise Group' which has been in existence over 30 years. We are dedicated to help recovering cardiac patients, young and old, male and female, or anyone else whose doctor had recommended that it would be advisable to take up a regime of sensible exercise. Again let me say we are totally voluntary meaning no one gets paid, but we do have an administrative charge of £8 a month to be a member whether you come once a month or to every class, this is to pay for our excellent facilities at the school, a Christmas do and donations to various charities.

We meet at **Christ the King School** along The Boulevard turning immediately left immediately over the Ribble bridge from Bamber Bridge into The Boulevard taking the second turning right, follow the road round into Lawrence Avenue, then into the school parking area, every Tuesday and Thursday at 4.15 pm to 5.30 pm. The exercise consists of follow my leader type of movements gradually getting you out of puff a little and a few floor exercises for  $\frac{3}{4}$  hr followed by a knock about at badminton, or have a session in the equipment room where there are rowing, cycling, rolling road exercise equipment that you can use, this is on the Tuesday session on Thursday its slightly different, we start for the first  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a warm up follow my leader followed by  $\frac{1}{4}$  circuit training, this is were you do your own thing on the command of a whistle one minutes exercise at your own speed followed by 30 seconds recovery the last  $\frac{1}{4}$  is a warm down, finishing up with badminton; or the use of the equipment room. We are affiliated to the British Heart foundation and feature on their web site. They also cover us for public liability insurance.

I am Ray Cartwright. Chairman of the Ribble Exercise group we have four contact numbers for your information they are.

Lostock Hall Ray Cartwright 338221. Bamber Bridge Bob Kitchen 339653  
Penwortham Gerald Winstanley 616176 Leyland Bill Pickering 423506

Hope to see you soon bring a bottle of water and the usual gym dress **our motto is let us help you to help yourselves with sensible exercise**

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## Todd Lane Junction

The station at Todd Lane had an island platform with a short bay adjacent to the Preston line, which originally served as a locomotive neck for the assistance of heavy trains up the bank to Blackburn. There was also a siding on the junction curve and a loop to the south of the station. Facilities for newspapers and parcels existed, but not for goods. The name was changed from Preston Junction to Todd Lane Junction in 1952. Access to the platform was by way of a step staircase from the three-arched Todd Lane road bridge. It was built of brick with sandstone steps and half-way landing, with accommodation beneath for a lamp room and cold water stand-pipe. The station buildings comprised four separate blocks built of red Accrington brick, the gangways being wide enough for the storage of platform trucks etc. The first block (facing the bridge) contained the booking office with a room for the station master and parcels facilities; the second served as a general waiting room and porter's office; the third contained the ladies waiting room with wash room facilities, and the fourth was the gentlemen's lavatory.

The booking office was the only building on the station to have a cellar, and during the course of the demolition process, many old ledgers and rolls of advertising posters and timetables were removed from there and burned on site. A glazed, wrought-iron canopy with eight cast-iron stanchions on each side, covered the entire length of the buildings. The glazing was removed during the last war and never replaced, the frames being covered with boards and bitumen felted. A 1903 group photo (in Issue 3) On the booking office wall showed a staff of nine; this number had dwindled down to four by 1965, with three porters and the station master Bill Wright, who was also in charge of the station at Bamber Bridge. By the end of 1966 there was just one man left to look after the station, a long-serving well respected character called Arthur Bennett. He will be best remembered for his stentorian announcements on the arrival of east-bound passenger trains: 'All stations to Blackburn, Burnley and beyond !!!' or on some occasions, 'Up yonder !!', instead of beyond. He left the uninitiated wondering if only uncharted territory lay beyond Burnley. Arthur went on to take charge of Bamber Bridge station following the closure of Todd Lane on September 4, 1972. His signature announcement there was 'Bamber!!...Bamber!!!'.

The signal box at Todd Lane controlled the junction for Browndedge Crossing and Lostock Hall Junction. It also controlled the exit from a

Goods Loop, adjacent to the former ticket platform. It was a Railway Company (RSCo.) timber cabin with a 36 lever frame of the same manufacturer. This signal box controlled the electric lock of the ground frame at the Gas Works and also the bolt lock of the 'Preston Junction G.F.' It remained in use until 1972 and the introduction of Preston PSB. The Preston Junction G.F. (later called Todd Lane Junction and Carriage Shed Sidings G.F.) controlled the points which served a carriage siding on the left side of the Preston Junction curve. The was originally a four-lever frame, reduced to two levers sometime after 1934. It was decommissioned on February 9, 1969.

There were special instructions for Preston Junction that stated, 'Passenger trains for E.L. direction requiring assistance must stop at Preston Junction to attach the assistant engine'. **Courtesy of Bob Gregson from his book 'The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway around Preston. Available at bookshops ISBN 9780956518453**



*'Bert, Station Porter, Todd Lane, 1940's.  
Sent in by a Lostock Hall Magazine reader'*

## Mr Albert Twist



**Ged Wilson, Bob Hothersall, Willie Bell, Bert Twist and Errol Marsden  
Photo taken by Pete Vickers**

We have had replies to the name of the gentleman mentioned in Brian Whittle's memories last month.

Joyce Cookson contacted us to let us know his name was Bert Twist, and he lived around Lostock Fold. He had a brother called Dick, who was a bus driver and a sister who she thinks was called Jean.

Mr Pete Vickers, who supplied us with the above photo says -

'I read Brian Whittle's piece with interest, I think he is a bit older than me. The war veteran he mentioned was Bert Twist, he is shown in the picture (taken by me) during our Sunday evening stroll around Lostock Lane. Also in the picture are Ged Wilson, Bob Hothersall, Willie Bell and Errol Marsden. I remember Errol well enough, his Dad got us some work building the original British Legion Club which was a big Nissan hut when it first appeared.

My parents were registered for rationing at Mrs Hough's in Fairfield Street and, quite typically I joined a great gang of kids as we sat on biscuit tins around the television to watch the coronation. If you sat to one side the picture was distorted by a large magnifying device hung in front of the screen but it was all the wonder of the age. In following years I helped with the manufacture of Christmas wreaths until your fingers bled from twisting the wire around the twigs of holly and then I used to work for Ted Hugh at his smallholding up Bee Lane.

My brother and sister and myself were registered at Skew Bridge Co-op for our rations, that gave the family two chances of getting the rare tin of fruit or corned beef when there was a special opportunity to extend the rations, then walking home down the Gas Works Road you always had a spare empty basket to collect coke that had fallen off the wagons as we made our way to Watlington and home to Brownedge Road.

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# A TARDY GATE GIRL (7)

In the early autumn months Mrs Hobson, Gordon and Mick Mick's grandmother, would organise a trip to see the Blackpool Illuminations. A Fishwick's double decker bus would arrive and we would all pile on. We always had to make a toilet stop on the way there. On one occasion my mother got stuck in the turnstile. Everybody was panicking trying to get her out. Eventually one of the attendants managed to release the turnstile and she was freed. On the homeward journey we would call into a chip shop for our supper. This went on for a number of years and it was always something to look forward to. It was at this time of year that we would collect firewood for bonfire night. It was a very serious business, as the Mercer Road gang (namely Bernard McGarry, Harold Coupe and Dennis Anyon), or St Gerrard's gang would often raid it. We had to guard the firewood with ropes and tin buckets tied all around it. We had a knitting needle as a bayonet tied to a stick to stand guard with. One of us would sit up in the tree in my back garden with the bayonet and look out towards the fields to see if anyone was coming. If we saw anyone we would pull the rope attached to the buckets to alert the others. All we ever did was shout to our dads that the bommie was being raided. It was real serious stuff. I must add that no one ever got hurt and that the bayonet was only to scare people off, we never used it. We used to collect wood from the fields all around us. There was always plenty of broken branches. Sometimes there would be fallen trees or branches that the farmer had cut off. One time we managed to get a railway sleeper from the side of the rail track at the Gas Works. The only problem getting it was we had to cross Gas Works Road, without being seen by the man in the Telfar. We had to time it so that the Telfar would be inside the Gas Works while we crossed the road. The sleeper was very heavy and we were only half way across the road when the Telfar came out. Bobby, John and Siddy ran off and left me and Jean stood in the middle of the road unable to move. Eventually we managed to get the sleeper into the fields and drag it back home.

One time Mrs Lea the lady who lived next door in the end house, wanted the overhanging branches cut from the tree in our garden. John and I climbed up the tree and started sawing the branches. My mum suddenly appeared and said 'Jacqueline, which branch are you sawing?' I pointed to the branch and suddenly realised that John was sitting on it. Luckily I had only just started to saw through it so John was able to scramble back to safety.

On Sunday's we would make a small fire in the field at the back of the houses. Each child had to bring either a piece of meat, or a potato, an onion or a carrot. Bobby had two billy cans. One was used to cook the stew and the other would cook blackberries (unwashed) that we had collected that day. The smell was wonderful, the taste was awful, but we would eat it all anyway.

On bonfire night all the wood would be brought onto the front field. All the dads would join in and help us build it. My dad was usually the one to light the fire. All the fireworks were shared out and the dads would light them, while the women would make soup, parched peas, treacle toffee and jacket potatoes. It was a real street affair, and well worth all the hard work that went into it.

The winters then seemed to be quite harsh compared to today's winters. We would have plenty of frost and snow. The windows in my bedroom would be frozen with Jack Frost patterns all over it. It was easier for me to stay in bed and read until mother came home



and lit the fire. We would never play out for long as it was so cold, but we were always wrapped up. As well as wearing a vest, the girls would wear a liberty bodice and a winceyette underskirt underneath the top clothes. They had rubber buttons around the bottom of them. I think they were to fasten your knickers to. When the ponds froze over we would skate on them. We only skated on the edge because it wasn't safe to skate across the middle.

Michael Whiteley who lived at the posh end of the road made the mistake one year of skating in the middle. He fell in and it was a mad scramble to get him out. We were constantly warned about the danger of falling through the ice by our parents. It did make us very careful and cautious, but it didn't stop us from doing it.

When it snowed we would build snowmen and have snowball fights. Our dads would come out too. The it would be inside to dry out and sit in front of a huge coal fire to get warm. On Christmas Eve we would look through the window to see if it was snowing. If I saw it first I would run and open the back door to shout to the Rimmers. They would do the same if they were the first to see it.

Just before Christmas I used to go to Leyland and Birmingham Rubber Works party. On a couple of occasions I went to Leyland Motors as well. I liked the Rubber Works one better. We used to have a tea, then entertainment and a Christmas stocking with a half crown at the bottom. I always used to ask my dad if he could lend me half a crown so that I could buy his Christmas present. It was usually a pair of arm bands or suspenders. The arm bands were to keep his shirt sleeves up above the cuffs of his jacket. The suspenders were to keep his socks up. He only wore them when he went out so that he would look smart. He was a very smart looking man when he was dressed up. He would never clean his own shoes though. My mother more often than not did them for him. If she refused he would shout 'Tish clean me shoes'. I would clean them, but I would charge him 6d. On one occasion when he was going out, he had brown shoes on with a navy blue suit. I said 'You're not going out like that are you ?' He said 'Why whats up' Well if there is one thing I cannot stand, its wearing brown shoes with navy blue suits. So I told him. He looked down, shrugged his shoulders and changed his shoes. He never wore the brown shoes with that suit again.

I started school at Lostock Hall County School in January 1949. I was four and a half years old. At that time you went to school from four and a half to 14 or 15. I remember the first day very well. My teacher was Miss Desmond and she had the most beautiful auburn hair. She told me to hang my coat up on the butterfly peg. We were all given a 'Tidy Box' to keep our things in. I remember needing the toilet and walking towards the door, then being stopped by Miss Desmond and being asked where I was going. I didn't realise at the time that I was supposed to put my hand in the air to ask for permission. There was a boy sitting next to me wearing very short, baggy shorts, with this strange wiggly worm sticking out of them. I know I asked him what it was and him saying that it was his little John Willy. Even though I had Bobby and John as friends, we had never seen each other fully undressed, so this was quite a new thing for me. This was the start of my sex education, although I didn't realise that at the time.

After the first day everything settled down into a routine. Each afternoon we had to have a sleep in the hall on a small camp bed. The smallest of the children (usually Patricia Riley) would be allowed to dress up as 'Wee Willie Winkie' and had to come round to each bed to see if everyone had gone to sleep. I always wanted to dress up in a costume because I was very small, but I was probably too plump.

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