

The Lostock Hall Magazine

Issue 10
October 2013

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Welcome to the October (11th) 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'.

Bob Ainsworth has written 'A lifetime in Lostock Hall' you can find on our centre pages. We have more memories of Lostock Hall Methodist Church written by Mrs Margaret Heyes.

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 amongst 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.

If you would like to support the magazine by placing an advert in our next issue please see the contact details below.

Have a look on Flickr at the Lostock Hall group of photographs, please upload any you would like to share.

Copies of the magazine will always be available at Lostock Hall Library on Watkin Lane. Contact me to have your own copy delivered each month.

This years Remembrance Day is on November 10th.

Front Cover image – St James Church, Lostock Hall, - by The Lostock Hall Magazine
Regards, Heather Crook

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- 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

Ward Street 27th October, 1940

Many of our residents will still remember the terrible day when three bombs dropped on the Ward Street area of Lostock Hall. As an act of Remembrance we can remember the names are all the individuals killed on that sad day.

Adams Mavis 13
Banks William 36
Banks Annie 36
Banks Annie 15
Benson Alice 12
Clarkson Johnathan 74
Coates Richard 58
Coates Margaret 50
Coates Marion 7
Cookson Robert 55
Cookson Beatrice Maud 52
Hollinshead Monica 16
Livesey Jennie 27
Trafford John 11
Watson Cyril 41
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Articles from the Past

Missing Friend – Ratcliffe – Tidings are earnestly desired of **Walter Irwin Ratcliffe**, who left his home in Penwortham in January 1893 and was last heard of in Preston. His friends have something to communicate to his advantage. The inquirer is his sister, **Mrs Smalley**, 1 Dilworth Street, Lostock Hall, Lancashire.
Manchester Times, March 23 1894

Dog Muzzled – At Bamber Bridge Police Court, yesterday, **Thomas Matthews**, fireman, 29 Moss Grove, Lostock Hall was fined 1s. and costs for not having his dog muzzled.
The Weekly Standard and Express May 14 1898

Marriage a failure – A curious and somewhat humourous incident occurred at Lostock Hall on Monday. It appears that a certain couple had been living uncomfortably, and they finally parted. However, the husband persisted in annoying his better half, and a number of the inhabitants decided to make an example of him. On the night named they caught him and drove him before a considerable crowd, some kicking and others pushing him about. Eventually they arrived at a pond in Anchor field, Farington, when they seized him and threw him in. He however, managed to scramble out, and he was again thrown in. His wife on hearing of the affair went to his rescue.
Preston Chronicle May 6 1893

Serious Accident to a farmer at Lostock Hall A rather serious accident occurred on Saturday, to a farmer, called **Wilson**, at Lostock Hall. The unfortunate was stepping out of his cart, when the horse, a young and spirited animal, started. He was thrown to the ground, and one of the wheels passed over his chest. Medical assistance was procured, and he is progressing as well as can be expected.
Preston Chronicle Dec 16 1893

Alleged Assault – **John Cattmone**, labourer, Farington was summoned for assaulting **John Garrety**, grinder, Penwortham, at 10th ult., - Prosecutor stated that 10.50 on the night of the 10th February, he met the prisoner, who asked him for payment of debt, near the Tardy Gate. Refusing to comply with the request, he struck him, knocking him down three times. – **James Park** corroborated these statements. Defendant said he was going home, carrying a quantity of provisions, when prosecutor shoved him and knocked the goods of his shoulder. **George Ashley** and **Daniel Howson** made similar statements and the summons was dismissed.
Preston Chronicle March 17 1883

A Fraudulent Pun – A day or two or go, a man, apparently a labourer, went into a public house at **Tardy Gate**, near Preston, and asked the landlord if he would take stamps for a gill of ale. The answer was in the affirmative, and the man said he would have a gill. The beer being brought, the customer asked how many stamps he wanted, and was told 'Two'. Sidling round to the door, he took up the glass, gulped the beer down, gave two stamps on the floor, and cried 'There you are !' and bolted. **Boniface** followed sharply, but he has not caught the fellow yet.
Preston Chronicle February 6 1884

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PROUD TO BE INDEPENDENT

(From Ian Wilde)

For well over 100 years the family name of H & G Wilde was synonymous with everything that was beneficial about dealing with an independent funeral director at your time of greatest need.

When Roy Wilde retired some 10 years ago the business was sold to a holding company based in East Yorkshire. H & G Wilde has changed hands a number of times since then, most recently being acquired by one of the largest funeral operations in the UK, Dignity PLC.

During the years since the original sale Ian Wilde has strived to maintain the family atmosphere at H & G Wilde and the dedicated service provided. He now feels that the size of the organisation, of which H & G Wilde is only a tiny part, makes this impossible.

In order to provide services at a level that only a truly independent funeral director can provide Ian has established **Ian Wilde Independent Funeral Directors**.

Ian will focus on providing families with the service levels that they have come to associate with the Wilde family and will ensure that the passing of your loved one will be handled with compassion and sensitivity. Ian has a vast knowledge of the locality, community and local clergy, crematoria and cemeteries, all of which is vital in ensuring that family requests can be accommodated.

Ian Wilde Independent Funeral Directors will operate from the former White Bull Hotel, centrally located at 211, Station Road, Bamber Bridge. The premises have been tastefully redeveloped to provide funeral premises of the very highest standard. Comfortable arranging rooms are complemented by peaceful Chapels of Rest all of which combine to create a calming atmosphere in your time of distress.

Refurbishment work will be complete by the end of November 2013 and in the meantime Ian can be contacted on 07860 721629 where you can be assured of his personal attention 24 hours per day.



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Consider the difficulty of accessing your own bank account - identification, passwords, etc. It would be impossible if someone needed to access your finances on your behalf.

Moreover, being diagnosed with a serious illness is everybody's worst fear. If that illness is progressive you may only have a short time to address practical issues before symptoms take hold. If incapacity is the result of an accident it would be too late for you to act.

Making an LPA while you still have mental capacity is the only certain way to protect your interests in these circumstances.

Introducing LPA adviser Stephen Mars of Bramwell Estate Planning based in Preston.

Stephen is an appointed representative of New Leaf (WWF) and services the Lancashire area.



Stephen says "as a member of New Leaf I'm committed to providing the highest levels of service whilst adhering to their strict code of conduct, guarantee of a quality, professional service".

"At meetings I encourage family participation while speaking in simple terms to identify client's needs. After the FREE consultation I confirm a fixed price for managing applications (30 pages of forms) through to registration. Registration will take several weeks - a good reason to act promptly".

Client's Comments

"My father found the process of LPA registration daunting but thanks to Stephen, he handled all paperwork on our behalf both efficiently & effectively"
- Nicola Hughes, Ingol, Preston

"Stephen wasn't pushy and provided very friendly and helpful guidance"
- Gill Remson, Lea, Preston

"Stephen's prices were significantly less than my local solicitor and his home visits were extremely convenient. I would certainly recommend his service"
- Mrs Wood, Fulwood, Preston

"A professional LPA service with a fixed price solution, no hidden extras. I would certainly recommend giving Stephen a call"
- Alan Brownrigg, Fulwood, Preston

TIP: An LPA can be used before incapacity strikes, eg., when someone has 'lost confidence' in dealing with everyday financial matters and prefers not to deal with banks, etc.

Call Stephen on: 01772 367900

FRY INN

18 WATKIN LANE LOSTOCK HALL

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| | <u>LUNCH</u> | <u>TEA/SUPPER</u> |
|-----------|------------------|-------------------|
| Monday | CLOSED | CLOSED |
| Tuesday | 11.30am – 1.45pm | 4.30pm – 9.30pm |
| Wednesday | 11.30am – 1.45pm | 4.30pm – 9.30pm |
| Thursday | 11.30am – 1.45pm | 4.30pm – 9.30pm |
| Friday | 11.30am – 1.45pm | 4.30pm – 9.30pm |
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Mon - Fri: 09.00 - 18.30

Sat: 09.00 - 13.00

Closed for Lunch: 13.00 - 14.00



A lifetime living in Lostock Hall

On April 18th 1933 I was born to Arthur and Mary Ainsworth in the parlour of my maternal Grandmother's farmhouse where my parents lived at Stoney Lane Farm, Stoney Lane, Cuerden, Lostock Hall. The farmhouse is now demolished. It was a farm belonging to the Tatton Estate at Cuerdale Hall. Grandad had died and Grandma Margaret Hunt was the tenant. My mother's brother George was running the farm and his wife Elsie and my cousin Harry also lived there. Harry had been born 6 weeks before me and we were brought up together for the first few years of our lives.

The farm next door was also owned by the Tatton Estate, known as Woodcock and Blackhurst Farm on Stanifield Lane and was tenanted by my father's elder brother William Ainsworth. He and his wife Jane had had a daughter Rose born in the same year as Harry and I, there was one month between us all, being born in March, April and May, we were all good playmates together.

When I was approximately 3 years old my Father and Mother took a farm at Hutton. Whilst living there my sister Gladys was born.

It was difficult for me to get to school as I had 2 miles to walk across the fields from Hutton to Longton and it wasn't good on wet mornings, so my parents decided to move back to Lostock Hall so I could attend Lostock Hall Council School. They managed to

rent a farm owned by the Lancashire County Council, Woodcock Hall.

It was a very big old house with mullioned windows and it was situated right opposite the end of Lostock Lane. It was divided into two dwellings, part of it was occupied by a family called Dixons and the rest was the farm dwelling house. There was an internal door between the two properties. As we had moved into Woodcock Hall in February 1939 I spent the war years there. The original hallway was in the Dixon's portion of the house and it was massive. My Dad took bales of straw into the hall and made a den for us all to shelter in during the bombings. I remember well the Sunday teatime that the bomb dropped on Lostock Hall, Mother had ushered us all into the shelter next door and my Father decided to go and bring the horse in from the fields for safety (there were hardly any tractors on farms in those days). As the bomb dropped the great door between the two properties slammed shut with an almighty bang and the whole of the old house rocked, certainly a night to remember.

In 1941 my sister Phyllis was born in the front room of the farmhouse thus completing our family.

It wasn't all doom and gloom during the war as I spent many happy hours playing around the farm and was never short of friends out of the village as playmates. We played



football, hide and seek, fishing in the River Lostock, making bows and arrows out of willow branches which grew alongside the river in my Father's field. We played on our bikes and were never stuck for something to do. Sometimes Mother would me for the bread to Hesketh's shop on Watkin Lane, right opposite Ward Street. Occasionally on a Saturday I would go for pies to Dorothy Cowley's shop on the corner of Ward Street and Birtwistle Street, opposite Stopfords shop.

There were many old stories told about the old house, one was that every October the ghost of a man could be seen sitting on the staircase, but we or our neighbours never saw anything. Another tale was that there was a tunnel underground from Woodcock Hall to Todd Hall, I don't know how it crossed the River Lostock ! I think it unlikely myself. Sadly in 1956 Woodcock Hall with all its history was demolished by the Lancashire County Council. They built a new farmhouse but that was eventually pulled down to make way for road improvements and the roundabout at the end of Lostock Lane. School leaving age was 14 until the 1st April 1947, when it was extended to 15. My cousin Harry left school at 14 his birthday being in March of that year, but because my birthday was April 18th I had to attend school for another year, and I wasn't too happy about that as I wanted to work for my Father on the farm.

Just before the age of 18 all males in the U.K. had to register at the local Council Offices or the local Post Office and when you turned 18 you would receive your call up papers for National Service. Because I worked on the farm producing food which was still on ration after the war, I got a couple of deferments but when I was 20 in 1953 I had to leave Lostock for two years to do my bit for the Queen. I trained at Fulwood Barracks in the Loyal Regiment and then went out to Trieste in Italy. We were there as peacekeepers between Italy and Yugoslavia. In September 1954 a peace treaty was signed and my next posting was at Barnard Castle. In May 1955 I got demobbed from the army and returned to dear old Lostock Hall.

By this time I was courting my girlfriend Beryl, also from Lostock Hall and we were married in October 1955. We were lucky enough to obtain a smallholding only 500 yards from the place of my birth. Nearly 58 years later we still live in the same house.

My paternal Grandfather had passed on before I was born but my father told me in his younger days my

Grandfather had a cobblers shop situated next to the Tardy Gate Hotel on Leyland Road. So the Ainsworth family have lived around Lostock Hall for a very long time.

At the age of 80, I have lived most of my life here, so perhaps by now I will be accepted as a Lostock Haller.



Robert Ainsworth.

***'Harvest Time at Woodcock Hall Farm c. 1954
Mr Arthur Ainsworth and Mr Brian Swann cutting the corn.'***

THE NOOK, 1 COOTE LANE

On October 7th 1906, Father Mercer, called a meeting of all adult parishioners. They assembled in their separate guilds in the school chapel. Father Mercer wanted more permanent rooms for meetings, recreation and entertainment and wished to call such a building the Turner Memorial Hall. He wanted the parish to decide Yes or No, for the purpose of a ballot each one present received a bean, meaning Yes and a pea, No. The decision was made, everyone handed him a bean. A weekly subscription was fixed, the first collection to be made on December 2nd, the anniversary of the death of Father Turner. To supplement the fund raising Father Mercer obtained a plot of land on the north side of Coote Lane some 30 metres from Leyland Road. On this land he 'asked' the men of the parish to build a house in their spare time, it would then be sold. (Legend has it that he did intend this house to be raffled but he encountered legal difficulties) Mr J Seed of Farington donated a quantity of bricks, Michael Durkin turned up from Preston with his trowel, his popularity bringing a host of 'brickies' The Nook still stands as a memorial to the work of many hands and the personality and persuasive power of the parish priest. The Nook still stands as a memorial to the work of many hands and the personality and persuasive power of the parish priest.

Joe Bamford (RIP) remembered " The men of the parish were a grand body and everyone worked hard. My mother was the first tenant. It was sold when we went to live over Spion Cop."

Information is taken from 'Our lady of Lourdes and St Gerard's Magella " A Parish Story' 1891-1991'





JOIN THE POPPY TEAM

On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month 1918 the guns fell silent on the Western front

The soldiers hoped to come home to a land fit for heroes, but this was not to be. There was little or no work; families had no bread winner because many men had lost their lives in the War. Widows and wounded ex-servicemen were begging in the streets, life was very hard. But out of all this darkness and despair came Lance Corporal Lister a Lancashire man. He organized work and shelter for these people; he encouraged bosses to give work and shelter to the ex-service man and their families. They contributed 6d to the pot of gold; this pot of gold was used to help ex-servicemen and their families. The government of the day encouraged Lister to get all the different ex-service groups together under one umbrella, and so on May 15th 1921 was born the British Legion it did not become Royal until 1971

The work of the legion is just as relevant today as it was over 90 years ago, helping the serving and ex-servicemen and women of today's generation and their families.

In just a few weeks time the 92nd Poppy Appeal will be launched. The first poppy day in 1921 raised over £120000 in just one day this year we have raised over £38,000,000. We need help, your help if we are to raise the necessary funds to help all those ex-service, serving service men and women and their families who come to the Legion in their hour of need.

Can you give a little of your time to help those who have given a lot of their time to keep us safe. 1 hour would be great more would be even better. Remember we are there for ;

*The partners who grieve,
The injured who suffer,
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The unemployed who despair,
The soldiers who fight
The disabled who strive,
The heroes who serve,*

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION HELPS THEM ALL

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Turner 01772-7445839 or email michaelfrancis.turner@gmail.com

Lancashire Railwaymen's Reunion 2013

The right photo showing cheque presentation to Saint Catherine's Hospice at Lostock Hall, which took place on Tuesday 10th September 2013. The cheque was for £200.00, which was raised at a Lancashire railwaymen's reunion at the Leyland & Farington Social Club on the evening of Friday, August 2nd this year. The reunion was held to commemorate the 45th anniversary of the end of steam traction on British Railways, which came to a close on August 4th 1968. Many ex-Preston and Lostock Hall enginemen were in attendance, with ages ranging from 60 to 90. The evening was organised by two Lostock Hall enginemen, **Paul Tuson** and **Tom Jones**, and was a great success. We are all looking forward to the big 50th in 2018.....not far away.



Ted Jackson, Tom (Eric) Jones, Margaret Heyes and Paul Tuson

From left to right on the photo we have **Ted Jackson**, who worked on the railway at Preston all his working life as a guard; **Tom (Eric) Jones**, who worked as a locomotive fireman at Lostock Hall engine shed, and became the last man to drive a steam loco at the shed on the evening of the 15 Guinea special, which ran on August 11th 1968. He dropped the fire of Black 5, number 45110, and then moved her off the ash-pits onto one of the shed lines around midnight. On his left is **Margaret Heyes**, widow of **Ernie Heyes**, the engine driver who made history on the evening of August 2nd, 1968, when he drove the very last steam-hauled officially scheduled BR passenger service train from Preston to Liverpool Exchange. On her left is **Paul Tuson**, another locomotive fireman who worked at the famous Lostock Hall engine shed. Paul was fireman on Black 5 loco, number 45305, which ran one of the six 'End of steam' specials on August 4th 1968. He is seen presenting the cheque to a lovely young lady from the hospice, who's name escapes me.

Quite a famous Preston line-up for you here. I was the man behind the camera (Bob Gregson). I was not a footplateman, as I was only 15 years old when steam finished. I have always been an enthusiast, however, and have written two books on Preston's railways.

A photo from the reunion: the first shows **Jim Marlor** (left) and **Harry Bolton**, who were brought together on the evening of August 2nd 2013, for the first time in 45 years. Both men worked at Lostock Hall, and Harry was driver and Jim fireman of class 8F locomotive, 48476, which worked one of the final steam specials on August 4th 1968. They are holding all that is left of the engine, the numberplate, which I have in my collection. Best regards

Bob Gregson.

Author of 'The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway around Preston'



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MY YEARS AT LOSTOCK HALL METHODIST CHURCH 1972-2010

My happy, happy days had to come to an end in July 1980. My health was not good and doctors advised me to give up some of my commitments. I was teaching at Leyland St Marys High School during the week and our parents (Ernie's mum, and my mum and dad) were all failing in health and needed my attention. So, with a heavy heart it was the Sunday School and Junior Club I had to give up. Some of the girls I had started teaching in 1972, themselves became Sunday School teachers, how proud I am of them. Anne Kirkby has become a Deacon and is a minister in the north east of England. I did another period of teaching in the Sunday School, many years later. This time my class was all boys. Martin Eccles, Anne Kirkby's son was in it along with the Wigglesworth boys (Sorry I can't remember the names of the rest of the class).

My next role in Church, 1985-1981 was senior steward. Stewards helped to get the church ready for Sunday worship and look after the preacher of the day. I met many different preachers over the years as our ministers have usually two or three churches to administer to. Thus, they are not with us on several Sundays within the month. I was senior steward to two ministers during my time in office, the Reverend Frank Sanderson and the Reverend David Miller. Local preachers are very important as they take services when ministers are preaching elsewhere. They have years of study to do before they are fully qualified. They are not paid for their services and usually have a job or career during the week or are retired. Other commitments a senior steward has is to be one of the ministers right hand men, especially in his absence. Senior stewards should be present at all church meetings. The church belonged to the South Ribble Circuit, which included all Methodist churches in the South Ribble. Meetings were held several times a year, the senior steward was expected to attend along with the treasurer and one or two other officers of each church. These meetings were held to make large decisions, concerning the circuit, or individual churches who wished to make alterations to their buildings etc, or wanted to borrow money to make improvements. It was at these meetings that the ministerial staff passed on important information to the churches.

In 1991 I finished my term of office as senior steward and became the Ladies Fellowship Leader. The name of the meeting changed to 'NETWORK' circuit wise. Some churches like us preferred to keep the old name. I had finished teaching at St Marys in 1988, again for health reasons. The meetings were held in the room at the back of the church, the older ladies of the church came on Tuesdays at 2 00pm. We had a speaker, sang hymns and said prayers for the first hour, then we had a chat amongst the group and the meeting closed at 3.30pm. Two weeks in the month I asked someone to come in and give us 'the talk'. Whilst the other two or three weeks I did the talk. Sometimes it was difficult to get speakers, thus I had to step in. Preparing the talk took a great deal longer than to present it. It had to last at least half an hour. I tried to vary the type of presentation, some days we would listen to a cassette, discuss it, thinking how our lives could be affected by the message. On some occasions I asked a few of the members to assist me with the presentation. At one period, one Tuesday in the month we would meet in the Sheltered Housing off Ward Street. Several of our own church members lived there and we invited anyone who lived there to join us in their communal lounge. Again the Ladies Fellowship was a happy time for me, the speakers we had were all very good and I especially enjoyed these Tuesdays, as they were less stressful for me. Do not get me wrong I also did not mind leading the whole service. Teaching was my vocation and profession. I myself

learnt a great deal from my Sunday School classes, as well as from the older ladies in the Fellowship group.

Several times in the year there are Ecumenical meetings with all the other churches of Lostock Hall and Farington. St James C of E, St Gerards Roman Catholic, Calvary Mission and St Pauls Farington.

Womens World Day of Prayer is literally this. Each year a different country writes the service. This tells us about their homeland and their main problems. Two or three ladies from each of the Lostock Hall churches have parts of the service to read out. The service moves round to different churches each year. I have been the main reader once or twice, when it was our turn to organise the service and I have taken part in many of the services in other churches. I have found taking part in these services thought provoking and enjoyed meeting up with the ladies from other churches.

Good Friday Services moved to different Lostock Hall churches each year. The service of course is very important in the Christian calendar. I remember the last one that I attended at our church. During the service the congregation took flowers up to the front of the church. After the service some of the young ladies of the church decorated our wooden cross, which was in the church grounds at the front the church. On Easter Sunday morning the cross looked beautiful all decked in flowers.

I remember the Ecumenical Walk of Witness I took part in. We assembled outside St James church and then walked along Avondale Drive, up Brownedge Road, to the Four Lane Ends. We turned

around, and then went down Brownedge Road, to Leyland Road and back to St James church.

Churches were displaying their banners and thus Lostock Hall was showing its churches presence. The band tried to keep us relatively in step.



I was for many years a Pastoral Visitor in the

church. What is a Pastoral Visitor you might be asking ? Pastoral care is how the church members look after each other. Several people of the church volunteer to be pastoral visitors and they are given several people on a list of the church members, usually 6 – 10 to look after. I would check if my people were at church, if not, and if no one knew why they weren't present I would ring them to see if them and their families were okay. Any of my group knew Wednesday afternoons I was at home and they could pop round for a cup of tea and a chat if they wished to do. If I discovered any of the family were ill, at home or in hospital, I would go to visit them after phoning to see if that was okay. The good times in peoples lives were also a topic of conversation over many years. Of course, pastoral visitors had another member of the team to keep an eye on them.

Now I am back at Penwortham Church and I am enjoying just being there and having no responsibilities. Just being back with so many people who have know me since before my wedding and of course knew my beloved mum, Irene Sowerby very well. Though I will always cherish my memories at Lostock Hall Methodist Church.

Margaret Heyes. 2013

A Tardy Gate Girl (10)

On our return back to Lostock Hall Council School we were to learn that we were going to be moved to Walton-le-Dale Secondary Modern School in the autumn term. This school was brand new and we were to be the very first pupils to attend. The move was to prove to be a major turning point in our lives, but we did not realise it at the time. It took us a couple of weeks to get used to the school, as it was so big compared to what we had been used to. We were put into colour teams and a Head Boy and a Head Girl were chosen as well as prefects. I was chosen to be a prefect. I was the youngest one at thirteen and couldn't quite believe it when my name was called out. I kept wondering, why me? I was also put into an 'A' stream class, which was also unbelievable and I thought that they must have made a mistake. When we had to do a test to see who would stay in the 'A' stream and who would be moved down into the 'B' stream, I was sure that I would be moved down. I wasn't though, and I couldn't understand why. During that first year I must have finally reached my mental age when everything I did in lessons started to make sense. Before then I just did what I was supposed to do without understanding why. It was quite a nice feeling really. I wasn't as stupid as I thought after all.

One day while walking home from school with my friend Anne, one of the girls from down our road, Joyce Walters, was afraid to walk past Joan and Marion Watson's house in Wateringpool Lane. Stood outside the house with Joan and Marion was a girl called Ann, who wanted to hit Joyce. Ann's granddad was called Tommy Tucker and he used to be a boxer. Ann thought that she was a bit of a boxer too. Joyce was only small so my friend Anne and I said she should walk between us. The next thing I knew I had been punched in the nose by Ann the boxer. I ran after her past the policeman's house but had to stop as my nose was bleeding badly. The next day I gave her what for. The problem was, P.C. Smith, the village policeman, saw me and told me off. Why couldn't he have seen what had happened the day before in front of his house. Along with the village priest, the local policeman was to be feared also. None of us dared to do anything wrong, or more to the point be caught doing anything wrong, because the policeman would give you a clip round the ear, then tell your parents who would give you another one. At least we were brought up to show some respect. After that episode I was nicknamed the Tardy Hardy. That didn't seem fair to me. I wasn't a hard person at all. I would stick up for myself, but I would never start a fight or go looking for one. I didn't like trouble of any kind and would steer clear of it. I suppose it was a form of respect, although it was one that I didn't wish to have.

Some of the subjects offered at this new school were different to the Junior School. These were Science, Biology, Geometry, Shorthand, Typing, Commerce, Metal Work, Cookery Lessons and Gymnastics.

The Commercial subjects were taught by Miss Fromel. We had to learn to touch type by draping our cookery aprons over the typewriter – thus covering up the keys. To keep an even tempo we typed to music.

With the school having a large gymnasium we were introduced to some basic gymnastics. Competitive sports such as netball, rounders, football and cricket were included. These sports proved very popular. The school would compete against other schools on Saturday mornings. It was healthy competition not rivalry, with each school having the opportunity to be the hosts. Eventually I became captain of both the girls teams and was voted Sports Girl of the Year. I would take my nephew and niece, Martin and Karen, along with me to the home games.

The Cookery teacher was called Miss Pye. This obviously created a great deal of laughter, nevertheless, she was brilliant at her job. The things we made were superb and very much appreciated at home. Mrs Pye also talked to us about sex education. She was really good with us and treated us with respect and understanding. If we were too embarrassed to ask her a question outright, we could write them down and put them in the question box. The following week she would answer them for us. This is where we started to learn about the different functions of males and females. The subject was no longer whispered about, it was more open, within the cookery room that is, and we were all able to learn alongside each other. I still hadn't got it quite right yet though. I remember walking home from school and suddenly realising that my mum and dad had, had sex TWICE. Well they must have, mustn't they, because there was me and my brother. This revelation hit me like a ton of bricks, well a telegraph pole actually, as I walked straight into one and gave myself a massive lump on my forehead. My mum asked me what I had done when I got home. I told her I had walked into the pole, but I couldn't tell her why. Because we were on an examination course the cookery lessons had to be dropped from the curriculum, so we had to do these lessons in the evening instead. Boys were allowed to do the Commercial subjects and Cookery Lessons as well as the girls. This did cause a bit of mickey taking at the time as it was unusual then for boys to do these subjects. It proved very useful to them in their chosen careers as chefs and clerical officers. These options would not have been an offer to them before. This was also the case for the girls, new doors and new avenues were opening, we were no longer destined for the mills or factories.

In the second year there, one of the teachers decided to give us ballroom dancing lessons at lunchtime for those who wanted to learn. This was a social skill, which would be useful later on. I joined the group with a bunch of others and found the lessons enjoyable. One of the dances was the Royal Empress Tango. We did this in formation in the shape of the letter 'T'. One day while visiting Blackpool Tower Ballroom, we all got up on the floor to do this dance. With us being in school uniform the audience must have thought that we were a dance troupe, so they did not get up to dance. They just sat and watched and applauded us at the end. My friend Anne and I also went to St James Institute on Friday nights for Old Tyme dancing lessons. This with the ballroom dancing came in useful on many occasions.

The school leaving age was still fifteen at the time. If you were on the Commercial course you were given the opportunity to stay on a further year as a senior student to take U.L.C.I. (Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes) examinations. I decided that I would stay and take the examinations to better my job prospects. I was actually chosen to be Head Girl in that final year, but because I was in an exam year another girl Jacqueline Watts was chosen instead. I was given a different coloured Senior Student badge to the rest, so that everybody would know that I would have been Head Girl.

It was during this same year that I met my first boyfriend. His name was Jack and he lived next door to my brother and his family in Walton le Dale. I could not go on dates with him on my own. I had to take Jean from down our road with me. I could not understand what he saw in me and thought he could have done much better. After the exams, some of us went on a trip to Germany. My prospective employer was on the trip with his wife. She was the school secretary. I was introduced to him and informed that I would be working with him on our return. I never had an interview as such, but I suppose I was observed while on holiday.

By Jackie Stuart

continued next month.

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