

The Preston Magazine



Issue 6
December 2012

A Preston Lad's Christmas
Sweep's Row
The Bull and Royal



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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 the 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
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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.

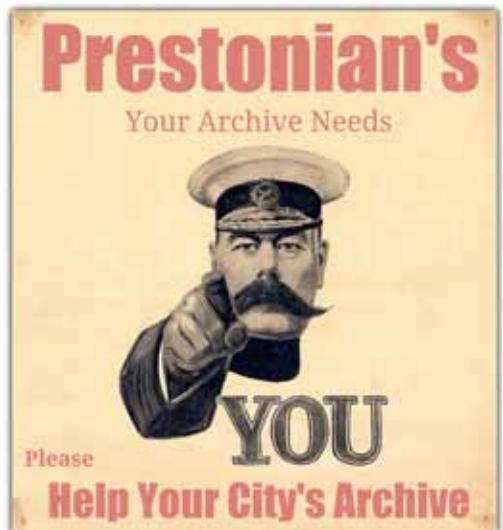
At present the upper date range is 1990. We also try and confine the general geographical area to Preston, Penwortham, Fulwood, Grimsargh, Walton le Dale, Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall.

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 our 6th edition of The Preston Magazine for December 2012, which we hope you will enjoy, please do let us know. Our free monthly magazine contains snippets of lesser known history articles relating to Preston.

A big thankyou for our advertisers, without them we could not produce this magazine. Please support them whenever you can.

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 magazine, The Penwortham Magazine and also our new venture, The Lostock Hall Magazine. www.priory.lancs.sch.uk you can also access The Preston Magazine via www.blogpreston.co.uk

Many thanks to our guest writers, Steve Halliwell, Peter Vickers and Robert Gregson, also the ongoing serial of Arthur Eric Crook relating to his childhood years in the cottage home, Ivy Bank in Brockholes View in the 1920's.

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

We are looking for images and memories relating to Preston, please send them to us.

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.

We are desperately looking for advertisers to help produce our magazine each month, please get in touch if you can help.

Front Cover Image courtesy of George D. Thompson

Regards,
Heather

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Christmas Preparations in 1872

Old Father Christmas is on the eve of again making his appearance amongst us, and the best preparations is an indispensable necessity for a thorough and gladsome hailing of the welcome guest. In the country the fattening up of choice animals, and the 'feeding' up of pigs, geese, ducks, turkeys &c., have received prominent attention in the past few months. In the town the great preparations for the battle have been amongst the shopkeepers, and public taste has been the idol adored, a vital consideration, of course, underlying it. Pyramids of all the good things consumed at this season form the attractive feature in most of the shop windows, and a superabundant supply of the 'slaughtered innocents' form clustering coverings for more than one whole shop front. A continual rattle of the canisters, weigh scales, and what is more important, the money is the sound which greets the ears as one passes the shop doors. A feast for the eyes is everywhere strove for, and *auri furor* seems to be the maxim of all. As we are about to particularise the principal shops, we shall simply say here that the decorations and displays were on the whole superior to previous years, and we express the hope that the good people of Proud Preston may never experience less peace and plenty that exists at this present time.

MARKET PLACE

Commencing at Cheapside the first shop that has made a special display is that of Messrs. E. Thornley and Co., grocers, and in all the articles displayed neatness is prominently observable. In addition to groceries of various kinds he has crystallized fruits and the arrangement of the window is specially attractive. Mr Wrightson's shop looks remarkably well and contains an abundance of articles. Undoubtedly the most attractive windows in the Market Place are those of Mr John Thornley, grocer. One window is full of nothing else than articles of various kinds brought from China and Japan. There are mandarin teapots, Chinese and Japanese porcelain, spill vases and &c., which in addition to being a comparative curiosity, are nicely laid out. The other window is most chastely arranged with currants, raisins, &c. This shop undoubtedly seems the greatest attraction of the grocer's in the market place, and Mr Thornley is complimented on his again so ably holding the palm. An abundance of groceries and fruits were stored in the shop of Messrs. T.B. Dick and Co., Mr Brown, fruiterer, had an as fine and beautiful display of fruits, game &c., of any person in town. His windows and interior of the shop were exquisitely arranged, and during the whole of yesterday and last night there was a crowd of admirers. They had 100 brace of pheasants, 250 turkeys, 100 hares, 150 geese, 1000 rabbits, and game of various other kinds. There is a tremendous array of apples and oranges, 10 tons of St Michaels and 20 tons of Valencia oranges, and 500 barrels of American apples, having been purchased for Christmastide. There is also a very large quantity of the celebrated Cambridge sausages temptingly displayed. Mr Toulmin and Mr Poole, pork dealers, both have a large number of pigs. Messrs., Hamilton, Parkinson and others – were equal to the occasion for all kinds of drapery.



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The Bamber Bridge and Preston Extension (cont.)

Together with the thirteen arches, the pier between No's 24 and 25 collapsed completely, and most of the surviving piers were so badly damaged they had to be taken down and rebuilt. Soon after the accident occurred, the sub-contractors along with the two works inspectors attended the scene. A number of men were quickly appointed to prevent the arches nearest the Penwortham reservoir from going the same way as the others. Large timber beams and planks were procured and they set about shoring-up the piers either side of arch No. 30. The senior inspector of works, Mr Mason (appropriate name), on having surveyed the remaining parts of the viaduct concluded that :

'The 18th pier from the river is, we perceive from inspection of the ruins, slightly cracked at the bottom. A portion of brickwork above the stone springers of the 19th is left standing to a considerable height, and the lower portion of the pier has sustained a considerable crack. The 20th, 21st and 22nd piers are also cracked at the bottom, and the 23rd is cracked in the centre of the brickwork and at the bottom as well, a large portion of the work above the springers remaining. The 24th pier leans considerably towards the Penwortham reservoir and has sustained a large crack at the bottom. The 25th is entirely down, the brick and stonework being distributed with the brickwork of the arches on each side of it. The 26th is also cracked and the 27th is only injured, a thick piece of timber between it and the 28th having been split by the pressure. The 29th leans towards the Ribble and has sustained several large cracks, and the pier on the other side leans the other way.'

A disturbing account given by the Preston Guardian would have been enough to discourage the hardiest traveller from crossing the viaduct on a train :

'There have been various rumours afloat as to the cause of the accident, some attributing it to the rain having softened the mortar and preventing it setting; others to the badness of materials, the mortar being stated to contain very little lime and too much sand, mixed with a quantity of common soil; and others to the bad workmanship throughout. We have been given to understand that representations have frequently been made to the contractors that the arches would never stand, but must give way the first time a train passed over them, if not before. Some time ago, in a case where the contractors were summoned by several workmen for non-payment of wages, it was strongly rumoured that disclosures would be made by the plaintiffs respecting the badness of workmanship of the arches; but such disclosures, however, were not made. The contractors will suffer a heavy loss from the accident; and, in addition, the opening of this track of the East Lancashire Railway Company's line will be delayed for a considerable period. Providentially, no person was injured by the accident; had it been otherwise there would no doubt have been a searching investigation into its cause, and the whole of the circumstances connected with the erection of the arches.'

Taken from 'The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway around Preston' by Bob Gregson
ISBN 9780956518453
Continued next month.



PRESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PROGRAMME 2012-2013

- Monday 1 October 2012 *Historic Views of Preston: a New Perspective*
Speaker: Stephen Sartin
- Monday 5 November 2012 *New Light on South Ribble: the Romans at
Walton-le-Dale, the Cuerdale Hoard and
Penwortham Castle*
Speaker: Dr David Hunt
- Monday 3 December 2012 *Will Onda – Preston's Acrobat, Filmmaker
and Cinema Impresario*
Speaker: Emma Heslewood
- Monday 7 January 2013 *The History of our River: Preston and the River
Ribble from Prehistory to the Present Day*
Speaker: Dr Alan Crosby
- Monday 4 February 2013 *From Port Sunlight to Rivington –
the Life of Lord Leverhulme*
Speaker: Malcolm Tranter
- Monday 4 March 2013 *The History of Dick, Kerr Works, Preston*
Speaker: Colin Dickinson
- Monday 8 April 2013 *Whalley – Portrait of a Village*
Speaker: Cliff Astin
- Monday 13 May 2013 Annual General Meeting followed by
'All Stations to Longridge'
Speaker: David Hindle

The meetings are held in the Central Methodist Church,
Lune Street, Preston, starting at 7.15 pm

Visitors and new members are very welcome

Members £10 annual subscription
£2 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

Christmas in Preston in the 1830's

METEOROLOGY – On the evening of Christmas Day, the heavens were splendidly illuminated by the Aurora Borealis, the scintillations of which were most remarkably bright, and were accompanied by a cracking noise, such as takes place when sparks are drawn from an electrical machine. On the following night the moon was also surrounded by a most beautiful halo for several hours.

Preston Chronicle January 1st 1831

FATAL ACCIDENT – A dreadful and fateful accident occurred on Christmas Day, to Thomas Hogg, a youth about 17 years of age, the son of Mr Hogg of this town, linen-merchant. He went out with two companions to enjoy the day in shooting small birds, in the fields, about Ashton and Lea. Having to cross a hedge and ditch, in the latter township, he threw his gun over before him, the ground being hard from frost, the concussion was so great as to break the stock of the gun, and also to occasion it to go off. The mouth of the piece being at this time directed towards the young man, the contents entered his right breast, and melancholy to relate, killed him on the spot.

Preston Chronicle January 1st 1831

A poor labouring man named Robert Parkinson, who gains his living by taking up coals, was knocked down and run over near the Black Bull, in Friargate, in this town, about one o'clock on Christmas Eve, by a car in which there were 5 persons. The poor man who is 77 years of age was a good deal injured in one of his arms, one of the wheels of the car having passed over it. The driver of the vehicle did not deign to stop and inquire what mischief he had done, but if it should come to his knowledge that he has rendered the man totally unable to pursue his calling, it is to be hoped that his sense of justice will induce him, or those who were with him in the car at the time, to make some compensation to the injured person, who resides at No. 12 in Whittaker's Row.

Preston Chronicle January 1st 1831

Old English hospitality – Early on the morning of Christmas Day upwards of 120 poor persons assembled at the house of Mr John Parker, of Salmesbury, for the purpose of partaking of their neighbours annual and truly Old English bounty of beef stew and black puddings. It is upwards of ten years ago since Mr Parker gave his first Christmas treat, when about a score of persons attended. Since that time he has not solicited the attendance of anyone, but his liberal manner and generous conduct on this, as well as on many former occasions, ensure him an ample attendance of grateful visitors, of all persuasions, as soon as the festive season approaches. The united ages of three of his visitors amounted to 252 ! Mr Parker is the individual, who in his enthusiasm as a genuine, or in other words a 'radical reformer', sent to the present Lord Chancellor, (then Mr Brougham) a present of one of the finest geese which the county ever produced, in token of his admiration of the talent and gallantry displayed by that distinguished individual in his defence of the late Queen Caroline. The then 'learned counsel' so gratifying a letter of thanks for the gift, that Mr Parker had it placed in a frame, and regards it to this day as the most valuable article in his hospitable domicile.

Preston Chronicle December 28th 1833.

The Black Horse

**Friargate
Orchard St,
Preston**



8 Cask Ales – Unicorn, Dizzy Blonde, XB, Golden Dragon, Old Tom, Cumbria, IPA, Double Hop IPA, Robinson Crusoe, Old Rosie Scrumpie, Amstel, Budvar, Grolsh Blonde, Veltins Lagers, Stowford Press Cider, Wines, Spirits, Bottles

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PART FIVE in a series of articles

by Pub Historian Steve Halliwell

<http://pubsinpreston.blogspot.co.uk>

The Bull and Royal Hotel, Church Street

The origins of the Bull and Royal Hotel next to the Minster go back a considerable way. Indeed, it was originally known as the White Bull in the 1600's, and can claim quite properly to be one of the oldest properties of its kind in the city. It has, in all those years been at the forefront in the accommodation and entertaining of dignitaries, aristocracy, royalty, and celebrities of all types, to say nothing of military personnel during periods of conflict, such as the Rebellion of 1745. Bonnie Prince Charlie stayed here, becoming quite smitten with the ladies of the town, and one in particular, one Miss Grace Peddar, to whom he presented a locket containing his portrait.

In the mid-19th century, Charles Dickens stayed for a while at the Bull and Royal. He wanted to be close by to experience at first hand the privations that the ordinary people of Preston were having to endure, and they proved to be the inspiration for his book "Hard Times" and that the 'Coketown' in the novel is, in fact, Preston.

From 1773 the hotel was owned by the Derby family, who were politically influential in the town over a long period of time, and it was they who were responsible for the construction of the magnificent Assembly Room, and although it is no longer open to the public, remains one of the most magnificent rooms in the North of England.

Today, the Bull and Royal, in its several guises, remains at the forefront of entertaining the public. Now owned by a local inn company, it has been sympathetically renovated in line with its status as a Grade II Listed Building, providing it with an off-the-street bar, currently trading as the 'Guild Tavern', a spacious and comfortable lounge with a huge bar, at the bottom of the ancient Courtyard, and a marvellous entertainment room with its own bar facilities, and either live music or a great D.J. every night except Monday. There really is something for everyone.

The Bull carries a huge variety of beverages, including FIVE hand-pumped cask ales, the popular Stowell range of draught wines, and much, much more. As a point of added value, all that the Bull serves comes with the comfort and convenience that has always been associated with a hotel of this calibre.



Visit their blog: <http://bullandroyal.blogspot.co.uk>

Victorian Preston and The Whittingham Hospital Railway

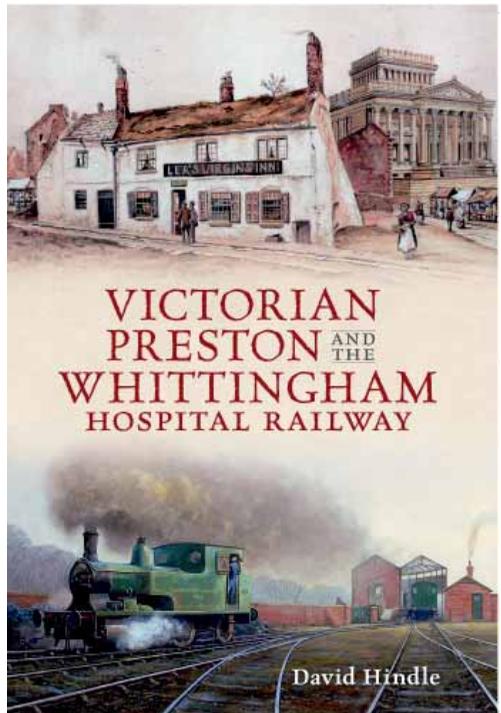
By David Hindle

This book is a real gem and would make an excellent Christmas present for anyone interested in local history or the railways. David Hindle, author and historian, is a retired police officer from Grimsargh and author of the delightful and informative book "All Stations to Longridge".

'Written in commemoration of Preston Guild 2012, David takes a journey into history to explore the social, cultural and economic background to Preston during the Industrial Revolution, primarily to see if life in Preston then lived up to the affectionate claim to be the 'good old days' and at the same time takes a nostalgic look at the foundations of the music hall industry. Charles Dickens visited Preston at the beginning of the infamous cotton famine in 1861. As usual Dickens's literary eye was focused on 'the underdog' and the 'hard times' that they had to endure during the so-called good old days. David Hindle's extensive research suggests that the level of squalor, prostitution, pauperism and unwanted pregnancies contributed to poor health and the need for the penniless and mentally ill to be fully institutionalised in the established workhouse or the new asylums such as Whittingham, which was served by its own private railway. The Whittingham Hospital Railway (WHR), known colloquially as the nurses' special, was primarily intended for hospital staff working shifts and residing in Preston and the surrounding villages of Grimsargh, Longridge, Chipping and Ribchester. The railway was constructed between 1887 and 1889 as a mineral line to convey coal and provisions to the new Whittingham Hospital, linking the hospital with the joint London & North Western and Lancashire & Yorkshire's Preston to Longridge branch line at Grimsargh. Passengers soon followed and private stations were built at either end of the almost two-mile long (8,560 feet), standard gauge line at Whittingham and Grimsargh. This book is an altogether fascinating insight into the social history of Preston linked with a Victorian anachronism, 'The Whittingham Hospital Railway.'

Available from Amberley Publishing
ISBN 9781445610092

Waterstones, Amazon and many local bookshops



A Preston Lad's Christmas Memories (1920's)

The month of December brought that we were impatiently waiting for, Christmas time, and all that it held. There was the Sunday School party to look forward to and another given by the Band of Hope, and the Scouts had a little do, also our own party at the orphanage. What a miserable life a lot of children would have had if it had not been for the religious authorities. Everything revolved around the church and Sunday School, no wonder there was a massive attendance in those harsh days. When King Cotton reigned supreme, we had the cotton magnates to thank for the brighter periods in our lives. Although the operatives were worked hard and treated harshly, it was these same men who built most of the churches, who in turn gave us treats and interests which allowed us to have pleasanter times in our young lives. Not forgetting prize days when a book was presented to us for good attendance on Sunday afternoons. All the Sunday School teachers and some members of the Men's Bible Class turned out to give us a splendid Christmas party, a small present and an hour or two of pleasant entertainment. I think many children joined the Band of Hope, and signed a pledge, that we would always remain teetotal, for the Christmas do at the end of the year.

At the orphanage the old battleaxe, Miss Hall, must have been touched by the birthdate of our Lord Jesus, she became almost human and benign. A week before Christmas, out came the trimmings, which had been carefully taken down and carefully rolled and packed away at the end of festivities the previous year. Miles, I write that tongue in cheek, mile of crepe paper was unrolled and the art of pinning two different colours at right angles, then passing one carefully over the other and carefully stacked at one side. Paper rings made from various coloured papers, sticky on one side, manufactured one long chain. A ten foot Christmas tree had been delivered and baubles made of different coloured glass, in all kinds of shapes, some with frosting on, were carefully threaded with coloured thread to make a loop, and gently placed on the branches. Tinsel was twined over all over the tree, Chinese lanterns hung upon it, and some beautiful glass birds in iridescent colours with long tails made of fine white hair built onto a spring clip which was fastened to the boughs. We finished up with sore thumbs from pressing drawing pins into the walls and ceilings. The decorations were so profuse you could hardly see the ceiling, so many trimmings were in evidence. One night was set apart for mixing the cake ingredients. Some boys were stoning dates, others busy getting the seeds out of sultanas, some cutting candied peel into small squares, and the suet wanted chopping into small pieces. Glace cherries needed cutting in half, and now and again one eaten, oranges or was it lemons needed grating. Miss Hall weighed out the flour, and butter etc., and out came the big wooden spoon and the earthenware basin and we all had a stir in our turn. Oh, and there was treacle as well. After a really good stirring, it was put into a large baking tin which had been lined with greaseproof paper. Then we were all allowed to clean out the bowl and a host of sticky fingers scooped out blobs of the treacly sticky stuff and transferred it to our gobs. It was as tasty as the finished article. Mince pies had been sent from the workhouse, they were as

big as meat and potato pies, each pie must have contained a quarter pound of mincemeat. After the cake was cooked and cooled, it was covered in almond paste, then iced. Cream fondant sweets and little silver balls were put on the top. A fancy frilly paper band went around the side and placed in the cool pantry till 'THE DAY'.

When the tree was finished, with all the decorations glistening back at us in the gaslight, four of the bigger boys manhandled it into its place of honour in the playroom. It was called the playroom but the only time it was ever played in was on Christmas Day. There was a lovely organ in the corner, with two foot pedals to blow the air into the bellows, though in the seven years I was there nobody ever played it. Such a shame to have such a wonderful instrument merely as a decorative item.

When the tree was in position steps were brought in and Miss Hall solemnly placed the big tinsel star at the highest point on the tree and everyone applauded.

Preparing for the big day was as exciting as the day itself. When Christmas Day dawned we woke to find our stockings had been filled with nuts, dates, an apple and an orange, a piece of coal which meant we would never be cold during the ensuing year. We carried them downstairs, having made our beds beforehand, and placed them on the sideboard then commenced our usual tasks.

One year I was scrubbing the three flags at the front gate, singing a carol, one I knew I would be singing with the Church choir, and a man passing by shouted 'Merry Christmas Lad !' and gave me a tanner (sixpence) a fortune to me. I pocketed it saying nothing to Miss Hall as she would have insisted on me giving all the other boys a halfpenny each. No fear, the tanner was mine and I slipped it down my stocking.

After breakfast, and the washing up completed, we all washed ourselves and cleaned our teeth with soot and salt, hair spruced back with soap and we trooped upstairs to get changed into our Sunday best ready to go to church (St Mary's). We all gathered round the big table, the smallest children led the way into the playroom to see our presents all set out in order of age. The little ones all said 'Thankyou Father Christmas' on command, then we would open our parcels to find out what we had been given. A chocolate smoker's outfit, a bag of fruit pastilles, a shilling, and a present. The smaller boys got the usual ludo, snakes and ladders, a cardboard affair that opened out into a square paper fish with a metal insert and two little fishing rods with magnets attached and without looking you had to fish around till you caught a fish, they all had different numbers on and the angler with the highest total of won, after the full compliment of fish had been hooked. A curious custom was observed regarding Christmas presents at the home, the older boys received the toy, game etc., that the boy nearest your age had got last year. So on your last Christmas you knew you would receive 'Huttons Adventure Book for Boys', and your first job was to put a fresh brown paper backing on it, thereby ensuring that the original cover always stayed in

pristine condition.

After the festive season was over, every so often after the evening tasks had been done, if all the comics had been read, which we got backdated from some philanthropist, one plucked up courage to ask very deferentially 'Please may I play with my present or read my book tonight ?' and if 'she that must be obeyed' was in a pleasant mood would say 'Certainly, it yours'.

A quick appraisal of our presents and off we had to go to church and give thanks at the Christmas service. It was the one service I wished was soon over. I would hurriedly divest myself of my raiment, wish all and sundry 'A merry Xmas' and hurry off home for dinner.

Christmas dinner usually consisted of mashed spuds, roast potatoes (the only time we ever had them) sprouts, carrots and turnip, and pork instead of the usual beef we had on Sundays, and lashings of gravy for a change. When we had cleaned our plates of any vestige of that the repast the plates were taken away by one or two of us. Then we waited with bated breath for Miss Hall to bring in the pudding, divested of the cloth it had been boiled in and had been tipped out of the big basin in which it had been cooked, followed by her favourite, viz. Norman, who carried in a big jug of custard. Everyone had a big helping and if you were lucky you might find a threepenny bit in your helping. I was lucky on one or two occasions and was rewarded with a glare from the archenemy. After a swell tuck in, bloated and sated, it was hard work washing up etc,. Then we all sat down at the large table and played with and showed off our presents. The gramophone was brought out and we took turns to turn the handle and change the needles. Carols mainly, sung by choirs or played by brass bands. Tea was at half past four, paste sandwiches and a meat one, instead of the usual jam, followed by jelly and cream or peaches, biscuits, the mince pies were scoffed, then a sizeable piece of Christmas cake and she made sure we all got one of the fondant creams on our slice, and it was good. I will say that for the old terror, she could cook and bake extremely well. After tea a spell of bible reading relating to Christ's birth and she never forgot to tell us about when she was a girl and they were so poor one Christmas all they had to eat was boiled potatoes and dripping.

At seven, the girls from next door came in, and games commenced. Musical chairs, Blind Mans Bluff, Pin the tail on the donkey blindfolded, (no kissing games in those days) crackers were pulled, hats worn, tacklers tales told, Mick and Pat jokes resurrected, then carols were sung to finish off a great day. We were allowed to stay up till 10 o'clock, the rest of the time in bed by eight and no talking in bed. So ended the best day of the year. One Christmas Day prior to my fourteenth year, I managed to kiss Emily Sanger in the passage, and blushed for days at my audacity.

Boxing Day was quieter of course, eating the remnants of the day before's repast and cleaning up the debris of the previous evenings fun and games.



Blue Anchor, Blue Anchor Yard, Market Place, Preston.

Old and Ancient Inns, Taverns and Beer-houses in Preston

Hundreds of stories and other details relating to nearly 800 beer-houses and licensed premises, all within the old borough boundaries.

A MUST for local historians, family historians, and Prestonians the world over. Contributions received from U.S.A., Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

<http://pubsinpreston.blogspot.co.uk>

John Crook

Over the past months I have written about shipbuilding on the Ribble, The Preston Regatta, and Ballooning; quite a mixture; but one man was associated with all these events. He was John Crook, sometimes occupant of the “Pleasure Boat Inn” on Riverside, a man who had more adventures than “Indiana Jones.” In July 1859 Thomas Atkinson was the proprietor of a boathouse and the adjacent beer house on the riverside but the 1861 census tells us the property had become the abode of John Crook and was known as “The Pleasure Boat Inn”.



As this was before the dock development The River Ribble was much wider with sandbanks and islands to negotiate as an approach was made by boat towards the open sea. In October 1866 John Crook and two friends were out near the “Naze” spearing flukes. Seeing that a great fish was left floundering in a pool as the tide receded they headed towards the commotion and found themselves facing a huge fish displaying a formidable row or two of sharp-looking teeth and a tail that was whisked in such a manner as to attack the naked legs. After some time they stilled it's thrashing by repeatedly stabbing it with their “*flowk-rakes*” and with some difficulty loaded it into their small craft and headed for Lytham. They “moored” their catch to a boat that was “lying to” and made their way to “The Talbot” for refreshment. The beast was identified at a “sharpnosed” skate, usually found in more northern waters, and after it had been on display for two days it was divided amongst the captors as a rare fish treat for the table. The fish weighed some 60lbs and measured over 5ft in length and some 3ft 9inches in breadth. In a similar manner in July 1870 a huge sturgeon was pursued up the river in the direction of Walton Deeps followed by at least three boats urged on by a Mr Ware a local fishmonger. The fish survived gunshot wounds and pitchfork attacks and was eventually roped by the tail and dragged ashore to the cheers of the vast assembly on the banks. Whilst Mr Crook was not involved in the capture the sturgeon was exhibited at “The Pleasure Boat Inn” the following day. The fish measured some 8ft 1inch in length and 3ft 2inches in girth

and weighed 183lbs. Several years later, in March 1883, Mr Crook's son, also called John, was



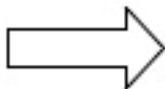
directed to pursue a large fish seen in shallow water near to “The Pleasure Boat Inn”. It was a porpoise and as on other occasions in was hunted until it expired. Whilst it was not unusual to see such creatures in the mouth of the estuary it was a rare thing so far up the river. The porpoise was nearly 5ft long and weighed 2cwts. It was displayed in the window of a local

fishmonger.

John Crook was very much involved with the adventures offered by the hot air balloon. In September 1862 he accompanied Mr Coxwell on a flight that flew over the Preston town centre before landing near to “The Saddle Inn” at Lea. On completion of the journey the balloon was packed up and conveyed to “The Pleasure Boat Inn” suggesting that Mr Crook had more than a casual involvement in the excursion. Twenty years later in 1882, again a guild year, Mr Crook joined Professor Simmons as he ascended from Avenham Park on a voyage terminating in the Chorley area. In 1902 Mr Crook took to the air at the age of 71 for a flight from Moor Park to the Glasson Dock area, north of Lancaster.

In the report of the 1902 ascent it was recorded that Mr Crook had rescued some 32 persons from drowning in the River Ribble and had been in receipt of a silver medal from the Royal Humane Society in recognition of his efforts. This had not been a straightforward procedure. As early as April 1873, by which date he had saved some 23 lives, the request to The Society was declined, as at that time *“the society had not a single subscriber in the district”* Frustrated by this response the townspeople raised monies and in September 1873 the townspeople presented him with an illuminated address and a gold watch and albert inscribed *“Presented by the people of Preston to Mr John Cook of The Pleasure Boat Inn, in recognition of his bravery, in saving upwards of twenty persons from drowning in the Ribble, during the past fourteen years”* Eventually Mr Crook did get recognition from the Humane Society and on the 4th October 1884 the Mayor had presented Mr Crook with the Society's medal for the rescue of a young boy in February last. (Medal in the Discovery Room at the Harris Museum) Many efforts to attract custom were exerted from the exhibition of stuffed birds in 1864 to the display of curious fish caught in the Ribble and the “self acting organ” that must have proved unsatisfactory as it was offered for sale in September 1867. In 1879 he had plans for a 30-person steam launch but no evidence of its procurement has come to hand. The singing in the beer house, particularly on Sunday afternoons, was a handicap when applying for a spirit licence. Floods in 1866 and 1880 brought chaos to “The Pleasure Boat Inn” with most of the stock of beer and wine being distributed over a large area surrounding the buildings.

The link to the regatta is that Mr Crook provided cups as prizes for the sculling races in the 1870's in addition to entering races himself. The link to ship building is somewhat bizarre; at the Preston Engineering Exhibition in November 1865 *“Mr J. Crook of The Pleasure Boat Inn, Ribbleside, shows a beautiful model of a barque, and a model of a schooner made from the breastbone of a bantam cock.”*



John Crook also had a separate boathouse seen in the illustration at the far side of the “Bowling Green Inn” and continued to work as a boat builder and to hire out pleasure boats. He moved out of “The Pleasure Boat Inn” and in 1891 he was living in Euston Street where the census records him as a boat-builder. The licensing of “The Continental” which replaced “The Bowling Green Inn” in 1911 was dependant on the closure of “The Pleasure Boat Inn



SWEEP'S ROW

Sweep's Row was started in Tithebarn Street, Preston. It was demolished in 1882, to make room for the Gaiety Theatre, which was opened at the Guild of that year, and later became known as the Prince's Theatre.

Left: 'Sweep's Row', close to the old tithebarn.

Tithebarn Street must have presented a very different picture when these cottages were built, and their rurality was certainly more in keeping with the tithebarn which was situated in the next street, Feeble Street, despite the fact that they were not as old.

The tithebarn then had a frontage to the street, which now takes its name from it, and according to George Lang's map, dated 1774, it would have been an important thoroughfare from Churchgate, now Church Street, going north. Within a short distance from the end of Tithebarn Street, open fields began, one of which was Cuckstool Pit Meadow, where scolding women were taken to be dipped in the cuckstool. This, also, is where Meadow Street derives its name.

It is a long time since the stigma created through the gross injustice to the children of the town was removed. On them were perpetrated acts that cannot be imagined today, but 250 years ago, it was considered normal to use small children for the purpose of climbing up the inside of chimneys in order to sweep them. Various Bills were introduced to regulate chimney-sweepers, but it wasn't until 1842 that no-one under the age of 21 years was allowed to be employed in this work. Prior to that the limit had been 16 years, which itself had been a distinct improvement on the hitherto and appalling, 7 or 8 years of age. Later came the chimney-sweeping machine, which did away with the necessity of anyone climbing a chimney for the purpose of cleaning it. This was invented by Joseph Glass, who died in 1867

The tithebarn building, as I said, was in Feeble Street, which was immediately behind the Black-a Moor's Head Hotel, Lancaster Road. It was a large brick building with a strong foundation of stonework, and a flagged roof. Apparently, it didn't give the impression that it was particularly old, but a closer look reveals bricks of all lengths, up to 11 inches rather than the 9 inches that were the regulated standard after 1625, so the building pre-dated that. The window frames, however, were of a much later date.

The word 'Feeble' is an interesting one. It perhaps should have been more correctly 'Feable' which was an old Fylde term for 'handy', the 'handy way': the 'near cut' from Church Street to the Vicarage, which was situated close-by.

This story has been adapted by **Steve Halliwell**. For details and stories, and much more, about Preston's old Inns, Taverns, and beer houses, visit: <http://pubsinpreston.blogspot.co.uk>



Preston and Electric Lighting

Alderman Satterthwaite moved that the council pass a resolution assenting to the application from the Board of Trade by the National Electric Lighting Supply Co. Limited, for a provisional order, under the powers and provisions of the said Electric Lighting Act 1882, and of the Electric Lighting Act 1888, cited as the Preston Electric Lighting Order 1890, to light with electricity a portion of this borough. In doing this he pointed out that such would be giving the technical effect to the resolution come to by the Council at a previous meeting, at which time the company coming into town had not complied with all the regulations imposed on them.

Preston Guardian March 29th 1890

LOCAL GOSSIP There are signs of a brighter industrial future for Preston, notwithstanding the prognostications of some of the townsmen who appear to avert their vision from anything that has the semblance of a silver lining to the dark cloud which they argue is to be the canopy of the town for goodness knows how many generations to come. Everyone knows what a sad blow it was to the industrial prospects when the immense concern known as the Wagon Works was closed many years ago, so turning adrift hundreds of experienced handicraftsmen – breadwinners for their families. There are signs which cannot be well misinterpreted that a portion of those works will soon be again utilised, more than one inquiry having been made as to the capability of the buildings and the yard where the rank vegetation has so long grown. There is every reason also to believe that the formation of a new spinning company in the town will be carried to a successful, and let us hope, profitable issue. There are also reports to hand that an electric lighting company for the supply of the brilliant illuminant to dwellings and works is on the point of renting or purchasing a plot of land at the west end of the town, not far from Fylde Road, there to establish their works.

Preston Guardian Sept 6th 1890

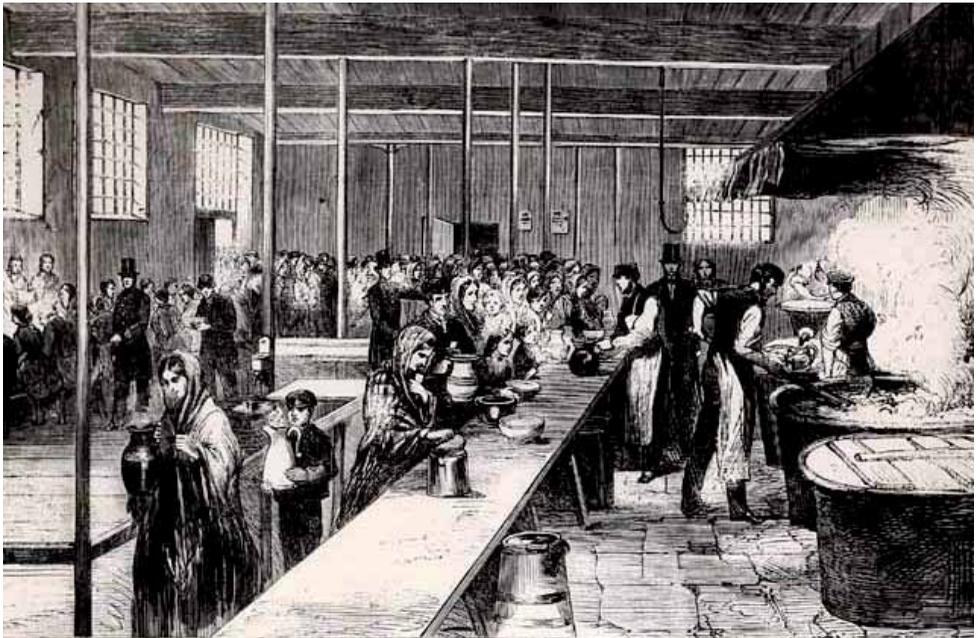
Electric Lighting in Preston

During the past week the electric light has been successfully introduced into several large business establishments in Preston, by the National Electric Supply Company, Limited. We understand the company is applying for a provisional order to enable them to light the whole town, and when this is granted their operations will be considerably extended. The light used is a Swann Incandescant, with an arc lamp, the invention of Mr Ryder, electrician to the company's contractors. Although exceedingly brilliant, putting the gas entirely into shade, this light has a soft, pleasant appearance and it is universally approved. The local arrangements are being carried out under the direction of Mr. F.F. Bennett, engineer to the company. A depot has been opened in Corporation-street, where the necessary plant is laid down, and we are informed that the company contemplate erecting a second engine, the present demand being fully up to the extent of their capacity for supply. Amongst the places where the light has been adopted are the Theatre Royal (inside and out), and a number of business establishments and public offices in Fishergate and Lune-street.

Preston Guardian December 20th 1890

Christmas and the Distress

Christmas which is just upon us, will necessarily be a cold one for the operatives, the resources of the past are not forthcoming; money is terribly scarce, and many a one, who, in former years, have been jubilant at this season, will now have to be content with less than a 'tithe' of that cheer which is indissolubly associated with the good old-fashioned carnival of Christmas. Preparations are being made in many quarters for giving treats to the **distressed operatives**; the ordinary paupers will receive their Christmas dinner, in accordance with custom, and all those in receipt of relief from the charitable committee will, if they get nothing else, have eightpence each to fall back upon from the Mansion House fund. The kitchen in Crooked-lane appears to be as busy a place as ever. The following boilers of soup – each containing 175 gallons, have been made during the week :- Saturday, 4 boilers of meat and 1 and a half of sweet soup, Monday, 4 meat and 1 sweet, Tuesday, 5 meat and 1 sweet, Wednesday, 4 meat 4 scouse, Thursday 6 meat, yesterday 6 meat and half a boiler of sweet meat. The meat soup contained upwards of 4,850lbs beef, mutton, &c., of first-rate quality. During the week, 23,853 loaves of bread have been given out weighing 42 tons 12 cwt; 35,741 quarts of soup, and



THE LANSKIRE DISTRESS.—THE SOUP-KITCHEN, CROOKED-LANE, PRESTON.

Soup Kitchen, Crooked-lane, Preston, London Illustrated News

9,057 quarts of scouse have been served at the Walker-street and the Crooked-lane establishments. The whole expense of the week, including bedding and clothing will exceed £3,000.

The following presents have been received during the week, for which the committee begs to offer its thanks.

A parcel of clothing from Mrs Foster, Whitehaven.

A parcel of grey flannel from Mrs Tollemache, Portland-terrace, Richmond, Surrey.

A crate of hats from L. Frayne, Bromsgrove.

Two bales and one hamper of clothing from E. Hallett and friends.

A bale of clothing from E.H. Sangley, Chudleigh, Devon.

A large bale of clothing from C.S. Bromsgrove.

Three bales of clothing from H. Bell and Sons, Mickelgate, York.

A large bale of clothing from Lady Park, 'very valuable'.

A truss of clothing from the Ladies Committee, Leeds.

Fifty sacks of rice chaff from W. Williams, Birkenhead.

A bale of clothing from friends at Castle Bromwick, per the Misses Kempson.

Ten bales of clothing from J. W. M'Clure, Manchester.

A sack of flour, one barrel of beef, twenty small barrels of herring, a barrel of fish, J.W. M'Clure, Manchester.

A bag of rice, a barrel of flour from Mr Baxter, Liverpool.

Two hundred plum puddings from the Lord Mayor's Committee, London.

A quarter of the famous bull 'Skyrocket' weighing 419 lbs from Lord Feversham.

A parcel of clothing from Mr Burnett, Liverpool, per Mr Livesey, Preston.

Two carcasses of venison, used in the soup from Cartechy Castle, Scotland.

A box of clothing, tea, sugar &c., from Mrs Reyner, Waterloo.

A parcel of quilting, worsted, &c., from Mrs Jacson, Barton Lodge.

A sack of clothing from H. Rose Clark, Etwall, Derby.

A bale of clothing from George Earle, Hull.

One hamper of clothing from Thomas Cooper, Ulverstone.

3 boxes of clothing from Rossall College

87 lbs of venison from Messrs. Boulours, Marylebone.

A 2nd parcel clothing from United Sunday Scholars of Longsutton, per Rev. J. Nuller.

A case of caps and hats and a parcel of clothing from Penrim.

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