

The Preston Magazine



Issue 13
September 2013

Preston Riots
Preston Skating Rink
The Boulder Stone

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Welcome

Welcome to the 13th issue of The Preston Magazine our free monthly magazine containing snippets of lesser-known history articles relating to Preston.

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

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

This month's guest writers are Peter Vickers, Steve Halliwell, David Huggonson and also the 3rd part of Mr John Davies memories of working at Marsden's in Preston during the 1940's. Our ongoing serial 'A Preston Lad' by Arthur Eric Crook (1917-1997). Part 6 of The Harris Orphanage by Miss Andy Anderton.

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

Ian Rigby, historian for Preston North End is appealing for any information from relatives of PNE former players relating to research of the club's history. Please contact Ian at ianrigby351@btinternet.com or 01772 700966.

If you would like to submit any memories, information or photographs please get in touch.

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

Take a look at the Preston groups on Flickr, there are thousands of images, old and new. Preston Digital Archive is looking for old photos of Preston and surrounding area, please get in touch at the number below if you would like to contribute.

A copy of each issue of all the magazines is kept at Lancashire Records Office. Front Cover Image – The Minster, Church Street – by Heather Crook (where the Preston Historical Society will be holding their meetings this year.)

The Preston Magazine will be on Preston FM's Chat City programme every month on Tuesdays at around 10 30 from August 27rd. (Next date 24.9.13)

Regards, Heather Crook

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Serious Party Riots at Preston



Two persons shot and several injured

On Wednesday night last week, signs of a serious feud were apparent at the northern side of the town, in Wilton-street and Cragg's-row, commonly called 'Paddy's Rookery' from the large number of Irish living in the district. The English Protestants, with their ribbons of orange and blue, assembled in a large body and defiantly marched down to where the Irish Catholics were waiting to receive them. The Irish women were busily carrying brickbats &c., for the use of the men, who threw their missiles in a murderous manner at their opponents. For a short time the different parties contented themselves with stone throwing, but at about half past eight o'clock both sides received reinforcements, and, dispensing with the stones, proceeded to a hand to hand encounter, in which the women took an active part. All sorts of weapons were used. When the riot were at its height an Irishman rushed from a house and fired a pistol among the English party, one of whom named Robert Alston, fell to the ground exclaiming 'Oh, I'm shot'. Some of his comrades carried him from the spot, and the conflict was renewed more fiercely than ever. Two more shots were fired by the Irish, and an Englishman, named John Ribchester, was severely wounded in the eye, from which the blood flowed copiously. The Orange-men maintained their ground for a considerable time, but being outnumbered they ultimately retreated, with the Irish in full pursuit, occasionally sending a shower of brickbats at their assailants. One man was hit on the head with a paving stone, and fell to the ground, where he lay helpless for a short time. He was removed by some of his party, and at this juncture a body of police, under the command of Superintendent Dunn, arrived. A vast number of persons had also arrived, and the most intense excitement prevailed. The efforts of the police to quell the disturbance were unavailing, and their presence only seemed to increase the violence of the antagonists. A Catholic priest, Father de Betham, having received information of the row, now appeared upon the scene, and in a few words of kind request prevailed upon the Catholic party to withdraw from the disturbance. The Orangemen were dispersed by the police, and the wounded parties were attended to. The man Alston was conveyed to a neighbouring public house, (the Spinners Arms) still bleeding profusely and it was feared that death would result from loss of blood. Medical aid was obtained and it was discovered that he had received eight severe wounds on his head and other parts of the body. He still lies in a precarious condition, and it is doubtful if he will recover. A wounded Irishman was conveyed to the Dispensary where several of the combatants who had received cuts and bruises were attended to.

The Illustrated Police News, June 13 1868

PRESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PROGRAMME 2013-2014

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

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

Visitors and new members are very welcome

Members £10 annual subscription.

£2.50 admission for visitors.

PLEASE COME AND JOIN US

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

www.prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

'Come Along' September 15th

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Do you want a fun group to sing with?
Try close harmony singing with us



Free Learn to Sing Course

Sunday 15th September 9.45 - 4.00

at

**Leyland Methodist Junior School,
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No experience necessary

Or at our weekly practice - Every Thursday 7.30 - 10.30

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A REMARKABLY LARGE GRANITE BOULDER STONE

Sir, For several years past I have noticed a large granite boulder stone lying on the land nearly opposite the Wheat Sheaf Inn, in Water Lane. This remarkable stone was found embedded in the high hill near where it is now; part of the hill still remains with trees growing on the top. The size of the boulder is 3ft. 6in. by 2ft. 6in. by 2 ft. being about 30 cubic feet, and its weight will be upwards of 2½ tons. The question I wish to ask is, where did this large stone come from, and how was it conveyed to the spot where it was found ? This is a very important question, and I think will require the aid of a professor of geology to correctly solve. It is my humble opinion that this and other large boulders found in various parts of Lancashire have been transported by glaciers or ice in what geologists call the glacial period – thousands of years ago – from Scotland or Westmoreland. If this be so these boulders have a wonderful history. I should very much like to have the opinion of some of our local geologists on the subject. I think of getting the opinion of a professor of geology, either from Stonyhurst College or Owens College, Manchester. I would here suggest that this remarkable boulder be placed in Miller or Avenham Park, with an inscription upon it, stating where and when found, where it came from, and by what agency it was brought there. If this suggestion were carried into effect, it would give a stimulant to the science of geology in this part of Lancashire, and who can tell what amount of good might result to science from it ? I may state that some years ago a large boulder was found at Stony Knowls near Manchester. This remarkable stone is now in Peel Park, Salford, with a suitable inscription upon it. And last year while workmen were cutting for a railway in Harpurhey, Manchester, they came upon a large granite boulder 2½ tons weight. This boulder has been placed in the Queens Park, Manchester, near where it was found, and there has been a discussion going on in the Manchester papers as to where it came from. Several masters of geology have the matter now under consideration before the inscription is put upon it. I hope you will deem this worthy of being ventilated in your valuable columns. Yours &c., J.D.
Preston Guardian, Saturday February 19th, 1876.

Parks and Baths Committee –... Alderman Benson, in moving that the minutes of the Committee pass, said there was a large boulder stone somewhere about the bottom of Marsh-lane, which it was thought desirable to move into Avenham Park, with the permission of the Council. He had offered to pay the expenses. Alderman Ambler thought the Council would not object.
Preston Guardian, Saturday, 27th March, 1880.

The Committee agreed to allow Alderman Benson, at his own expense, to remove the large boulder stone, on the Spa estate, opposite the Wheat Sheaf Inn, Water Lane, for the purpose of placing it on a site to be chosen by the Parks Sub-Committee.
Preston Guardian, Saturday, June 19th, 1880.

The Boulder in Avenham Park – Lines written in Avenham Park on the huge granite boulder, recently exhumed and removed to its present station at the cost of Alderman Benson -

'Look on this fragment of earth's oldest rock
From Northern hills by fierce convulsion torn
Millions of years ago : ere aught yet lived :
Wrinkled by fire and storm, by torrents whirled,
Rounded by grinding ice, for ages long,
Within the crawling glacier's womb compressed,
Till heaving ocean bore the iceberg's mass
Over the labouring waves – when warmer climes
Dissolved the floating jail, this tortured block
Dropped not far distance hence, but over it,
Before they left what is now England called,
The drifting floods piled up great heaps of sand:
Ages rolled by – then was the desert waste,
By man invaded, yielded to the spade:
And from its cell the prisoner released,
Free to God's air and sun, was hither bought
Here may it bear its record of the past
Until once more the now fair flowery earth
Be ages hence again the ocean's bed
And where the hum of busy man is heard
Sea monsters litter – yet God over all bear rule.'

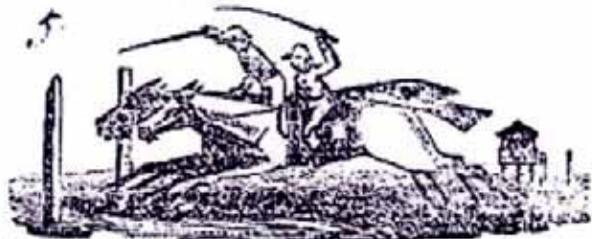
Preston Chronicle, 3rd July,1880.

**Does anyone have information regarding the boulder stone in Avenham or Miller Park ? Do you remember seeing it or being told about its existence ?
If so please contact The Preston Magazine on 07733 321911 or email your photos to us of any boulder stones you come across on Avenham and Miller Parks, it could be the one !**

**A boulder stone under the
North Union Bridge on
Miller Park**



TO SPORTSMEN, NATURALISTS, BREEDERS,
AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL.



**THE WONDER OF THE WORLD!
ALIVE!!!**

NOW EXHIBITING IN CHADWICK'S ORCHARD

Taken from the *Preston Chronicle* 26th August 1837

THE HORSE WITH EIGHT
LEGS!!

*How our ancestors entertained
themselves?*

A story adapted by

Steve Halliwell

In order for you to get your bearings before I begin the story, Chadwick's Orchard was the area of land which is now occupied by the Covered Market, and it was from this that Orchard Street took its name when it was created in the 1830's.

It would seem that animals have always been a source of entertainment and enjoyment to us humans. An unlikely appearance of a live alligator, nine feet in length, was made at the "Boar's Head Hotel"⁽¹⁾ in Friargate in 1817. It was described as "Very ferocious, but is so well secured that the most timid Lady may approach it without fear or danger." The animal formed part of a travelling menagerie, which were fairly common attraction to the town.

The above header to an advertisement was for a similar occurrence. The displaying of freaks of nature to tickle the fancy of our ancestors was, again, a fairly common occurrence. In this particular case the oddity was a horse with seven legs, and an eighth one, "fast approaching perfection!!!" The horse, called "Pincushion or Creeping Jenny"⁽²⁾ was seventeen years old, and when much younger had won races at both Canterbury and the 25 Guineas Stakes at Newmarket.⁽³⁾ I don't know if this was the equivalent of today's Two-thousand Guineas race.

The description of old Pincushion tells us that 'she stands 15 hands high, and displays a great symmetry of form; she stands on four hind feet and two fore feet. Her extra feet are kind and natural, having their fetlock joints, leg bones, hocks, thigh bones, stifle joints, hip bones, guides, sinews and tendons, exactly the same as the others'

She is sprightly, active, and so exceedingly docile, that she will not only rise on her four hind feet at command, (which puts her in the best position for showing her great muscular powers, and the use she has for her extra legs), but also can now gallop with great speed. She displays such wonderful sagacity, that when ordered, will go round the company, and inform any lady how long it will be before she is married; will tell the hour of the day, or day of the month, by counting the number with her fore-feet, or nodding, or shaking her head to signify Yes or No, with many other amusing tricks too numerous to mention. She is the property of Mr. Checkett, of Belgrave Hall, Leicester.

A similar advertisement appeared in the Hampshire Advertiser in the January of 1834, prior to an appearance in the Market Place, Southampton. The three and a half years separating the two events don't seem to have had a great effect on the development of her eighth leg, for on the earlier date it was said that it was 'fast approaching perfection!'

⁽¹⁾ For thousands of anecdotal stories about all Preston's Inns and Taverns, visit:- <http://pubsinpreston.blogspot.co.uk>

⁽²⁾ The animal would seem to have raced in the name 'Creeping Jenny', and perhaps acquired her other name because of her appearance?

⁽³⁾ See Racing Calendar 1822 - 23.

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

Our café 'The Graze and Grog' is now open 6 days a week, 12 till 7.

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The Preston First Skating Rink

Skating on ice can be traced back through several thousand years but skating on wheels has a much shorter history. Many attempts were made to manufacture a mechanical skate, or two for safety reasons, but it was not until 1863 when the four-wheeled turning roller skate, or quad skate, with four wheels set in two side-by-side pairs (front and rear), was designed, in New York City by James Leonard Plimpton that skating on a prepared hard surface became possible. The first public skating rink was opened in Newport Rhode Island U.S.A. in 1866. This was promptly followed by the opening of a rink in Covent Garden, London. There was some delay in the

Plimpton's Patent Roller Skates!



introduction of rinks outside of the one in London with some hesitation on the part of would-be entrepreneurs due to a number of court cases referring to the patenting of the design of the skates. However rinks opened in Oxford, Southampton and Brighton and with Plimpton's patent upheld in court in December 1874 they quickly became a popular venue in many provincial and seaside towns. A letter to *The Preston Chronicle* in 1875 suggested that a rink could be added to the attractions at The Preston Pleasure Gardens and The firm of Tullis who were recovering buildings belonging to the railway company suggested that the materials to hand would make a splendid skating rink. However it was not until the Whitsuntide of 1876 that the Preston rink opened to the public. During an exhibition at The Corn Exchange a temporary market had been erected off Warf Street, and abutting Charnley Street. It was realised by the Mayor, Alderman J.B. Hallmark, and other enterprising gentlemen about town that this temporary erection could be converted to provide a much sought after public amenity. Some £3,000 was invested in the conversion to a splendid rink; it's surface of 1,480 square yards being covered with Leimer asphalt making it the largest covered skating rink in the North of England. The attendance at the special invitation preview numbered over 800 persons who, in addition to taking part in the skating, were able to enjoy the fare offered by the refreshment room and from a place in the gallery they were able to listen to the music provided by the band conducted my none other than Mr Norwood and to witness the demonstrations provided by professional skaters from the world of variety. This form of presentation became was to continue for a number of years with "a band every evening". A price of admission for any of the three daily sessions was One Shilling with the hire of skates requiring a further Sixpence, with children half price; subscriptions were available. This combination of music and skating with variety acts became was the pattern followed in the early months of the facility. By September 1876 the admission on Thursday nights has increased to Two

THE PRESTON SKATING RINK,

Now in course of construction, will be opened on Whit-Monday, and will be the largest covered rink in the north of England.

The entrance will be from Charnley-street, off Fishergate, opposite to the Theatre Royal.

The rink will be open daily (Sunday excepted).

Morning.....10-50 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Afternoon..... 3-30 p.m. to 5-30 p.m.

Evening..... 7-30 p.m. to 9-30 p.m.

Admission, One Shilling; children under 12 half-price.
Hire of Skates, 6d.

Further particulars, as to terms of subscription, will be ascertained.

Shillings as this was the special “band-night” that included performances by The Band of the 84th Regiment who were stationed at Fulwood. As with all new things the novelty fades and by early 1877 more variety entertainment was offered with “Ben Hassan” – the Great Bedouin Arab Chief performing The Great Stick Trick, assisted by Madame Bedouin and her performing dogs, followed a few weeks later by an Illusionist and then by Professor Walton and his performing dogs and monkeys . Prices for the afternoon session had now been reduced to Three pence. There was a most dramatic turn of events in September 1878 when the manager of the skating rink, William Taylor, was attacked as he made his way home from the John O’Gaunt public house shortly after 10 o’clock. Witnesses stated that Mr Taylor exchanged a few words with two young men before one of the men, also called William Taylor, struck him to the head and allegedly kicked him on the ground. He was removed to the Infirmary where he died three

PRESTON SKATING RINK,
CHARNLEY-STREET.

Engagement of the Renowned

ARTIC SKATERS,
CHARLTON AND TYME,

Who are acknowledged by the Public, Press, and His
Proprietors to be Greatest Skaters of the present day,
for Six Days, Commencing

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25th,

When they will perform their marvellous evolutions
Every Evening, at 8 o'clock.

On Monday and Wednesday Evenings PROFESSOR
CHARLTON will perform his

CHAMPION STRAPLESS FEAT,

That is, executing the most intricate figures on Skates
without straps or any fasten'gs whatever.

Admission, 3d., Skates, 6d.; Ladies and Children
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Open Daily—Morning, 10 45 to 12 45; Afternoon, 2 to
4 30. Evening, 7 to 9 30.

MUSIC Every Evening and Saturday Afternoon.

The Right to Refuse Admittance Reserved.

event. Subsequently his attacker was sent for trial on the charge of manslaughter. What is significant to the story of the Skating Rink is that following this terrible event there are no further adverts in the newspaper for skating at The Preston Skating Rink. The building was still referred to as the skating ring for a number of years and was put to many uses. From June 1880 it was advertised as being available to hire and became the venue for a great variety of speakers, several of whom had been denied the use of the Corn Exchange; amongst them were the “Escaped Nun”, Edith O’Gorman, who having “escaped” from a closed order toured America speaking against the alleged horrors of convent life

she then continued her crusade in England; the “Land Emancipation Union” a group formed in Manchester determined to reform the laws on land tenure and the abolition of tithes; and as might be expected at this time of industrial unrest a mass meeting of cotton workers. There were of course more settled gatherings in the building still referred to as The Skating Rink, The Horticultural Society used the premises and it was the venue for Flower Show at the Guild of 1882. The egg, corn and butter markets were held there for a number of years but it was decided to demolish the building in February 1884. This was in line with similar situations in other towns as reported in “Chit Chat” where it was commented on that only The Salvation Army had any interest in buying up closed skating rinks to be used as “barracks”. So, for the time being Preston did not have a skating rink but others were to follow; right up to the present day.

Pete Vickers

Credit must be given to William Brown of Birmingham who, in 1876, perfected the mechanism to include a ball-race that was applied to the roller skates as most of us will have been familiar in days gone by, the same principle is still used on bicycles.

Life in the Harris Orphanage in the early 20th century

The home of the 'Little Sisters' was St Vincents Home for Boys. I later learned that Eileen's grandfather was the bandmaster at St Vincents.

Then we watched the Carmelite Convent being built. We would kneel on our beds at night to watch its progress and weave all kinds of imaginary yarns about it.

Once we were in the Harris Orphanage there was no way of getting out in the normal way. One girl had an Aunt in New Zealand who wanted to adopt her, and after a lot of fuss she was allowed to go. The only other child we 'lost' was my special little friend who died of dropsy and was buried in Barton churchyard.

When the steeple clock chimed we were expected to say to ourselves :-

¼ hour (1) All through this hour,

½ hour (1-2) Lord be my Guide,

¾ hour (1-2-3) And by my power,

On the hour (the lot) No foot shall slide.

To this day I repeat this to myself when I hear the bells chime.

Occasionally the children gave a concert organised by Miss Catterall and on one occasion during the First World War the soldiers from the barracks gave a concert for us.

We had a large map in the school of the war zone, and every morning the Governor would come in and put coloured pins in to show us the latest battles. Miss Catterall came in one morning to tell us that the 'Hampshire' had been sunk with Lord Kitchener on board.

We were always kept up-to-date with the news. The leading articles and special news items were read to us each day, and the 'Children's Newspaper' was passed around once a week. NO COMICS WERE ALLOWED.

Immediately after the war a party of 20 children from La Basse in Belgium came for a holiday. They were housed in the hospital and we were allowed to mix with them.

We did not get far, none of us could speak the others language. However Miss Rankin who could speak French, and was assistant to Miss Catterall, taught us the 'Marsellaise' and the Belgian children were taught the 'National Anthem' and so we were all brought together for the final singing and 'Goodbyes'. We were all encouraged to have a penfriend among the Belgian children, but this faded out over the years.

Miss Catterall taught us to sing all the National Anthems during the war, and on Empire Day we sang them all – The French – The Belgian – The Russian etc.

For about the last hour in school on Friday afternoons we could relax – Miss Catterall would read a book to us and we could lean on our desks, she always stopped at an exciting bit – ready for the following week.

At regular intervals we were allowed to write a letter home – as a lesson – all on the same day. Miss Catterall would mark them in red ink then they were sealed in her presence ready for the post.

We had some very good food cooked by the children under the direction of the Housemother. The girls would often eat my lunch for me – I never seemed to be hungry – indeed food has never played much part in life. Even now I am rather indifferent whether or not to eat. Matron came round the Homes each morning to see what was being cooked for lunch, and she looked in the pans to see all was good.

Shrove Tuesday we had a pancake after lunch. The last to finish eating her pancake had to have her face blacked with soot from the kitchen range – was put in the wash tub and pushed/rolled down the front path. We had an afternoon off school that day. During school holidays we could go off to a relative for a week at Easter and two weeks in August. Any child with nowhere to go was sent to Lytham where we had a big with a lady from ‘the house’ in charge.

During these holidays David and I were taken along to our great uncle – Mr Charles Jackson – who was a well known Preston dentist in Moor Lane to have our teeth ‘looked at’. On one day each week in the August holiday Grandfather would send David to the Livery stables – only a little way off in Aqueduct Street on the same side as our house to ‘order’ a landau for ‘tomorrow’. Next morning in front of the house stood a sparkling open landau, with a freshly groomed chestnut horse. We would climb in – Grandparents and us two children – rugs would be put round us, then the coachman would climb up into his seat, wrap his rug round his knees, take his whip – which was only used to guide his horse – then we were off. One day to Kirkham where our grandparents had friends, and the other day to Ribchester – through Moor Park Avenue. These were Red Letter days in our young lives.

There were two occasions I remember in the Clayton Hall, one was when Mr Thomas Parkinson, the owner of Parkinson’s Biscuit Works, came to give us a talk. He was given the ‘floor’ and told us how he started work in the factory he now owned – as a barefoot boy, sweeping the yard and factory floors, and how he progressed from job to job until he eventually owned the factory. He was an Alderman.

The other occasion was when the Governor Lt. Col. Jolly received an honour from the King (George V). We were all called to the Clayton Hall for a dance and the Governor told us all about the ceremony of receiving the honour, and he allowed us all to see the decoration in its box. I do not remember what this honour was for.

During my stay at the Harris Orphanage we had four different House Mothers in our home, two of whom left to be married and the third was a widow. These three although strict did teach us a lot, and did create a family atmosphere. The fourth and final one of my years is better not mentioned – her reign created the most unhappy period of my whole young life.

We had three sets of clothes :-

- Best - For church and special occasions
- Second best - For mid-week and Saturday outings
- School - For everyday wear

There will be lots I have omitted but these notes are as I remember them happening to me. One hears some sad tales of life in institutions, but so far as the Harris goes, I think this little piece of Julius Caesar is relevant –

‘The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones.’

So I hope I have mixed the good with the bad.

By Miss Andy Anderton

Continued next month

Patriotic Preston: 6

By David Huggonson

Welcome to this rather hastily put together but rather important edition of Patriotic Preston. Recently on the blog I have started a new project consisting of digital photographs of the reporting of the Tribunal cases by *The Preston Guardian*. In order to assist with this I thought I would provide a brief context - or mini history if you wish - from my original study into Preston's First World War history. You may also find of interest that I have placed my first chapter of my book on my blog. It is designed as a teaser ahead of next years release.

Courtesy to Briefing Media Ltd for the quote.

Until next month,

David.

Blog:

<http://preston1914.wordpress.com>

Twitter: @DavidHuggonson

Facebook: Preston's Great War

Under the Derby Scheme, three tribunals were established in Preston, each hearing cases from different areas of the region. The primary one was the 'Preston Tribunal', later renamed the 'Preston Local Tribunal' which the Mayor chaired and held office in the Town Hall. The applications that tribunal first held were simply reported very formally, in fact it was only the decisions themselves that were printed, as well as the volume of appeals that were heard during the week. Following the decision to open the tribunals to the public, more details were printed on the types of applications that were heard.

The cases for exemption from individuals, and from those in businesses on behalf of employees, also extended to the Preston's outlying farming community. These applications were considered by a second tribunal, titled the 'Fulwood Urban District Tribunal'. As the instructions from the War Office were clear, it had a chairman, five members, a clerk and a military representative. Its first applications, much like the Preston Tribunal, were reported as numbers and decisions; the only difference is that Fulwood's reviewed a lesser volume of applications.

A third tribunal dealt with Preston's more rural areas, and much like Fulwood's, it was a smaller tribunal with five members, as well as a military representative. The cases that this dealt were heard differed substantially to the applications reviewed at the Town Hall, owing to conscientious objection. One application in particular was from an Ashton Market Gardner and his brother, had stated that they would sooner be "hung, drawn, and quartered" than take a life in any form. The ensuing conversation suggests that this type of application may not have been tolerated:

Mr Hubberstey: "You breed pigs for killing, don't you?"

Applicant: "I don't kill myself. Besides, there is a difference between killing pigs and men."

Mr Hubberstey: "Are you English?"

Applicant: "Preston born."

Mr Hubberstey: "Then you're soft."

To further illustrate the tribunal member's point, the applicant's claim was rejected, and his brother was given conditional exemption.¹ These cases would have wider consideration when a second type of tribunal that dealt specifically with conscientious objectors was later set up. In a further indication that Preston's war experiences were heading in a different direction, was that the applications of married men yet to be heard.

Source: David Huggonson, *Patriotic Preston?: A northern town's First World War response, 1914-1916.*, UClan, 2011.

¹ *PG.*, March 13th 1916

Work Experience in Preston 1940's at Marsden's in Church Street

After the night school term started in September, 1942, our teacher, Mr Bob Danson, who owned Danson's Radio House on Fishergate Hill told his own apprentice and myself that there would not be enough students for the Radio Servicing course to run the following term. He asked 'Why don't you take the City and Guilds certificate in Radio Communications ?' We both replied that we knew nothing about transmitters etc. At that time I was the only person left at Marsden's who could not manage all the repairs on my own.

Consequently, some were farmed out to Danson's which I transported on the bike. Old Sam, our manager often complained at the time it took me to deliver a set. Bob Danson was teaching us two apprentices the City and Guilds syllabus ! I am forever grateful. A year later Bob suggested we both join the Royal Navy. He believed that they provided superior radio training. We joined and I have never regretted it. I met his apprentice in Hong Kong and from what I heard later he also took full advantage from the training and experience. Thank you very much, Bob!

FIRE WATCHING

Whilst working at Marsden's the staff of all the shops on that block of Church Street took their turn at fire watching. I don't remember how frequently this came around but I think about once a fortnight. At first we were located in an empty shop which had been a butcher's. It had obviously been empty for many years but all the trappings of the trade were present in the shop including the chopping block covered in a thick layer of dust. The shop was notorious for the murder of the butcher, Albert Dewhurst, by his wife in 1906. After stabbing her husband she was apprehended upstairs as she was about to stab their daughter who was in bed. My grandfather, a Police Inspector attended the incident. When on duty, Gordon, the more senior boy at Marsden's and I slept in a very old iron bed with brass knobs upstairs, probably the original ! The place was infested with bugs – we squashed a few – which identified the sweetish smell I had noticed in some houses where I went to repair radio sets. The premises backed onto the common lodging house where I used to go for sand in winter and most nights we were kept awake by the sounds of fighting, swearing and the screams of women.

We later moved across the street into another empty shop which was much cleaner and quieter but one morning our Methodist manager came into work after a night's fire watching and called Gordon and myself into the office to say severely 'Don't you boys have anything to do with the women next door. You must completely ignore them!' Next door was a brothel and one of the women had knocked him up in the early hours of the morning. He abandoned his post and walked home ! They never knocked us up but one night the sirens had sounded and there was a blitz on Liverpool. Gordon and I brought out two chairs and sat in the shop doorway. After a time one of us went back into the shop, put the kettle on the gas and came out again. We both fell fast asleep until someone on their way to work woke us to tell us of the smell. The bottom of the aluminium kettle had completely disappeared. !

DAD'S ARMY

Early in 1943 when I was just seventeen my pal who was a bit older joined the Home Guard as a dispatch rider and was issued with a Royal Enfield motor bike. This sounded great to me so off I went to the old barracks in London Road, (now the County Museum) and said to the Home Guard sergeant 'I believe you need dispatch riders.' 'Ooh! Yes, we do, badly,' he replied. 'Report on Thursday.' Come Thursday I duly reported and was led to a Z gun. These were anti aircraft guns that fired two rockets at a time from two sets of rails. I complained 'What's that to do with me I'm a dispatch rider'. 'Dispatch rider? We don't use them. You're a gunner, mate.' And so I trained as a gunner. On completion of a very short training period, our group of rookies was sent to man a battery on Ashton Park. We manned as two teams. The first crew stood by the guns from 8pm until 10pm when the second crew took over till midnight. It was just too bad if the Germans came after midnight; we were all in bed in Nissen huts in the grounds of Ashton Hall. The team not on the guns were given a good meal in the Hall. One evening after our meal the officer came round, 'How was your dinner?' 'Very good,' 'Well, you have just eaten horse!'

After the meal we were detailed off in turn to guard the site. This meant acting as a sentry at the corner of Blackpool Road and Pedders Lane with a Sten gun which none of us knew how to fire, a bag of bullets and a magazine with orders that on NO ACCOUNT must the bullets be placed in the magazine or the magazine into the gun. It was a good job that we did not need to fire the Sten; it was notorious for removing the finger tips of the left hand of the untrained! We were given a big stick to defend the site. There were no railings around the site having all been removed to assist in the war effort so it was assumed that the enemy would have the manners to come via what used to be the main entrance.

With my electrical training I passed the checking of the gun's firing system in record time. What a fool I was! When manning finished at midnight I had to go round the whole battery of 64 guns, which were arranged in a square, testing the firing circuits of both barrels. This was done with a Tool, artillery, 252, which was the back end of a rocket with a torch bulb in it. Of course, it was during the black-out although I was provided with a feeble, shaded torch. One night stumbling round the site I fell into something soft and squishy which moaned and reared up in front of me. I had landed on the stomach of a cow!

Our only experience of firing the things was one Sunday when we were all taken to the far end of the Wirral peninsula where there was an operational site. We waited our turn to go through the firing procedure on one gun but the slides on which the rockets ran must have required greasing for the gun leapt into the air and forward about a foot each time it was fired. I was most alarmed to see the spent rocket cases filling into the sea bracketing a merchant ship sailing out of Liverpool! My Dad's Army experience ended at the end of 1943 when I joined the Navy.

John Davies

A Preston Lad

Although **Miss Hall** was not held in such very high esteem, we feared her far more than we respected her. To us she talked in riddles at times, the meaning of which was difficult to comprehend at the time. Sayings like, 'I have got to be cruel to be kind' or when she was squeezing a boil or probing for a splinter or the like 'its hurts me more than it hurts you' seemed so illogical at the time.

Still for all that a few weeks before Christmas we would save our Saturday penny to buy her a present. Something would be chosen, then we would go every Saturday and tender our pennies and the shopkeeper gave us a little book made out for cash payments. He would mark the amount he received until the price of the article was paid. Then it was kept by her until Christmas Eve and it was wrapped in nice paper so it resembled what it meant to do, a present.

We were all little Tories, because she was. We knew she was Conservative because we once heard her talking to a painter decorating the Home, discussing the merits of Labour and Tory policy. The painter, who smoked and had a moustache said that the man who introduced Labour to the people was the spitting image of Jesus Christ. I think he was trying to play on her religious leanings.

At the time, **Emmett** and **Haworth** were the Tory candidates, **Tom Shaw** for Labour. Tom Shaw must have won sometime because he became Minister for War, there was a jingle going at the time and the opposing factions inserted their choice of candidate in the verse. But it is lost to prosperity now as I have forgotten the words.

At least we got a break from her, during the summer she had a fortnights holiday and went home to her mother and sister in Frenchwood Avenue. We took jolly good care that our footsteps didn't take us in that vicinity when we were out.

We once got a young woman who took her place, she let us stay up till ten o'clock, played the piano, and she smoked fags, because there was always a butt in the bottom of her morning cup of tea, which she had in bed. I was about ten at the time, and don't remember the name of the eldest boy, but there was a stink after she had finished her stint. It seemed this lad was invited to share her bed after the first few days and somehow it leaked out. So sadly we never saw her the next year. Apart from any scandal she was great, gave us free rein and no one got chastised. Anyway, we were never naughty for her and she was nice looking too.

Miss Hall fumed just because she used make-up on her face, I mean to say ! Miss **Shorthouse**, our teacher from Standard 1 and 2, used a powder puff behind the blackboard before she went home to dinner and nobody said anything about that. We boys thought that was a daring thing to do, after all it was something you did in the bedroom.

We could never understand why the orphanage drew people to come and visit and to look us over. We didn't appreciate being lined up and asked questions. **Mr Dunderdale**, the superintendent of the Men's Bible class would call. I don't know why because at thirteen the Sunday School scholars moved up into the Young Men's Bible Class, so we saw him every Sunday afternoon. Then the vicar would call and say a prayer. God, we said more than him in a day, everyday, I am sure. Then a contingent of women paid us periodical visits, might have been the Mothers Union, I don't know. The parochial Church Council would send a deputation. The Scoutmaster called. The Superintendent of the Sunday School would call, **Mr Nightingale** and he limped so we called him Hop-a-long Cassidy, behind his back. Even **Mr Crumbleholme** called one day, he was the verger and school caretaker, but I think someone had been taking the mickey out of his daughter, **Mildred**. A choir came at Christmas and sang to us in the grounds. Good Heavens, we went to

church twice on Sundays, three times the first Sunday in the month and went to Sunday School. Of course, we had the Board of Guardians doing their bit.

Talking about church it had always been my ambition to call the faithful to prayer. **Bandy Reid** had that job, I always envied him. I never got into that belfry until I paid a nostalgic visit when I was about 70 years of age. The bell had been taken out, it lay at the bottom of the staircase, so I never rang it after all. At least I gave it a clonk with my walking stick.

Two moving things happened at church, Anniversary Sunday and Confirmation time, oh yes, and standing around the War Memorial outside in my choir robes, and singing and paying homage to the fallen, a very solemn and moving occasion. The Harvest Festival was also a lovely spectacle.

Our church, St Mary's, is one of a few churches that had its own graveyard, a rare thing in a built up area. It made it awkward on Remembrance Sunday not to stand on the graves, as it was considered sacrilege.

After church I often spent a little time reading the names of those interred there and the verses inscribed. I often wondered where they had lived and what kind of life they had lived, what sorrow and laughter they must have shared. Yes, although I was considered by some (ie. Miss Hall) as irresponsible and a bare-faced liar, I had a serious side to my nature and could be very understanding. Music moved me deeply, as it can to this day. Life moved more slowly in my schooldays and simple things were savoured and enjoyed more fully than at the present time. We made our own amusement which cost nothing in monetary terms. Everything seemed to happen in sequence, bluebell time, then Mayflowers to be picked, bird nesting forays, blackberry picking, then sapping or pinching apples etc., catching bees and caterpillars in jars, (not forgetting frogspawn in late March.) It was a challenge to us who could collect the first of the frog's eggs and take them into school. The first person who did so had the honour of having them put in a large circular glass container, about a foot in diameter and six inches deep. Then we would watch with interest their progress from ova to little frogs. Even the teachers seemed as interested in their progress as were their charges.

Snig fray to be caught and sticklebacks and minnows, then later in the year frogs to be caught and the cruel practice of blowing them up with a straw and watching them float helplessly on the top of the pond in Redmans fields.

Then the games to be played, all had their season, fag cards, marbles, top and whip, skipping, releivio and trust. A regular pursuit was the bent spoon on a long stick to poke down cellar grids for any objects that had been dropped between the bars. Of course, I haven't mentioned swimming, cricket and football which can be taken for granted as Waverley Park had an open air swimming pool, Blimey it was cold, even in summer. Being at the orphanage had its drawbacks as far as our leisure hours were concerned. We had to be back on time, or else punishment was inflicted, so we could never give our spirits full rein, and stop out till we felt ready and willing to retrace our footsteps back home to dinner or tea, not so often dinner as we seldom got free before dinner time at the holiday times. Everyone seemed to know and recognise us as the 'Home Lads' so whereas ordinary boys got up to mischief and nothing happened except maybe a reprimand from some passerby, but us, folk seemed to delight in reporting us to Miss Hall, why I don't know. You would hear people say 'its them Home Lads up to their tricks' and everyone seemed to know where the orphanage was.

By Arthur Eric Crook (1917-1997)

To be continued



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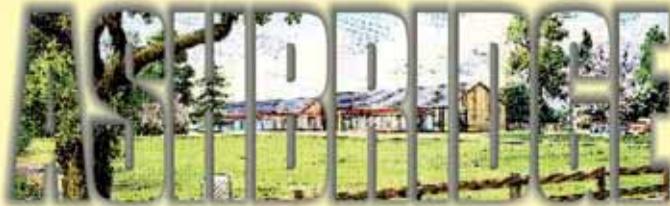
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