

The Preston Magazine



Issue 7
January 2013

Preston Pleasure Gardens

Preston Guild Poem

A Preston Lad

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The Preston Magazine in the Himalayas !

Between Christmas and New Year 2013 Gavin Roper set off on his lone mission to climb to Everest Base Camp in memory of his father, Bruce Roper.

He took along with him copies of our magazine and in the above photo you can see our Guild issue along with other

issues of our magazines being held by Gavin and his sherpa who name is Doje, who has been to the summit of Everest on 8 occasions.

Should you like to make a donation to the Alzheimer's Society please visit Gavin's page at

<http://www.justgiving.com/Gavin-Roper>

Well Done Gav – and all the best with your fundraising !



Welcome

Welcome to the 7th edition of The Preston Magazine for January, 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, Robert Gregson and Harry Walmsley, 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.

David Hindle, local historian and author is looking for memories relating to the British Rail Runabout tickets for his latest venture.

Included this month is the winning poem by Lorna Smithers, 'Proud of Preston' for the Preston Guild poetry competition which took place on 6th September and was judged by Michael Symmons Roberts (Professor of Poetry at Manchester Metropolitan University) and was held at County Hall. There were six runners up, including Melissa Lee-Houghton, who won the Jackie Hayes trophy. All poems can be found on 'The Preston Poets Society' website <http://prestonpoets.blogspot.co.uk> 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.

A copy of each magazine has been requested to be kept at Lancashire Records Office. 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 Steve Halliwell – phone boxes in Market St.

Regards and belated wishes for the New Year, Heather

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Pub Historian

Steve Halliwell

Takes a look at a footprint of
our city that was once the

“Virgins’ Inn”

Anchor Weind, off Friargate.



Anchor Weind was a narrow cobbled thoroughfare, little more than an alley-way, that connected Friargate with what was Back Lane, and is now Market Street. At the point that those two streets met, was also Lord Street, which at one time ran from where it does now, near the bus station, through where the Town (City) Hall now stands, and the old G.P.O. buildings/ Fish Market.

At the point that these three streets met was the **“Derby Arms Hotel”**, named after the Lord Derby’s that are commemorated in the street names, Lord Street and Lord’s Walk. In a previous life, in the 1700’s, the Derby Arms Hotel had been known as the **“Cock and Bottle”**.

Looking at the picture, above, you can see an area of land to the right of the **“Virgins’ Inn”**, where stood the buildings that were partially concealing the recently erected Harris Museum and Art Gallery. *“We can’t be having that”* – or words to that effect - declared the Town Councillors, and promptly demolished a swathe of offending buildings.

On a positive note, though, it did give the towns-folk the opportunity to see this particular building in a way that they had hitherto been unable. The market square to the right of the picture had a vibrancy that contrasted well with the majestic Harris Museum. In recent years, the only time that we have been able to experience that vibrancy has been at the autumn Pot Fair, and even that was a paler version of those of years’ gone by.

When you stand on the same footprint of the city now, you could equally be standing in the Tap Room of the long-gone **“Virgins’ Inn”**, known also as **“Lea’s Virgins’ Inn”**, Jane Lea being the last landlady, who was present there from 1873 until the day it was finally closed, in 1894. Now we have a row of telephone kiosks, arguably more useful to a greater proportion of residents?

Hundreds of stories surrounding Preston’s old **INNS, TAVERNS** and **BEER-HOUSES**, can be found at:

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



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Preston Digital Archive

Annual Appeal

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

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

Read on !

1. If you have 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
Preston Digital Archive, PO Box 1316, Preston PR1 0RT.
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.

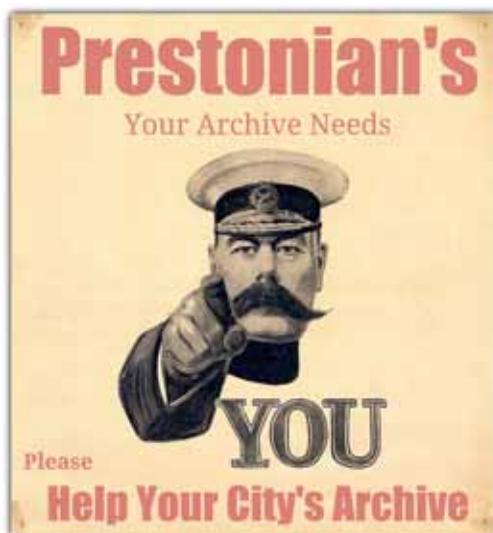
At present the upper date range is 1990. We also try and confine the general geographical area to Preston, Penwortham, Fulwood, Grimsargh, Walton le Dale, Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall.

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



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NEW FLAGS – Mr Joseph Pritt, of the **Black Horse Inn**, Friargate, has just completed a very handsome flag for the butchers of Preston. In the centre on the obverse side, is a very good representation of Mr Matthew Brown in the act of striking a bargain at a sale of cattle with Mr William Clayton. Immediately behind them is a representation of a prize bullock, formerly belonging to R.C. Richards Esq. of Kirkham, in the foreground is a sheep and in the background a number of cattle. A very ornamental and elaborate ribbon contains the words 'The Butcher's Association. May the town and trade of Preston flourish'. On the reverse side the butchers arms are represented, and also those of the borough, in a ray of light. Mr Pritt has also completed a very large flag for the card-room workers of the town, on one side, in the centre, is a representation of a carding-engine, with a 'grinder' in the act of putting a strap on a drum. On a ribbon are the words 'Preston Card-room Hands'. On the other side is a very well-formed roving-frame, with a female rover in the act of cleaning a frame. A ribbon bears the following 'We are united to support, but not combined to injure'. Mr Pritt is also busily engaged in the preparation of several bannerettes and illuminations for the forthcoming festivities.

Preston Chronicle

A 'SMASHER' – CAUTION TO THE PUBLIC – Shortly after six o'clock on Wednesday evening, a little boy, named James Moore, between seven and eight years of age, went into the **Black Horse Inn**, Friargate, for five pennyworth of gin. He produced a bottle, was supplied with the gin, and then tendered a crown piece in payment. Mr Drury, the landlord, on looking at the coin, saw at once that it was bad, and asked the lad from whom he had got it. The lad replied that a man who was standing in Orchard-street came to him, asked him to go for the gin, and gave him the crown piece to pay for it. Mr Drury, who told the boy to wait a little, then ran out to the police station, for an officer; but on arriving in Orchard-street, the enemy of the Mint had vanished, thinking, no doubt, that as the boy had not come straight back with the gin, the fraudulent coin had been discovered. The police have since kept a sharp lookout, but have not been able to discover the slightest trace of the man, who is dressed in black cloth clothes, wears a hat, is 5 ft. 9 in. high and has a pair of red, bushy whiskers.

Preston Chronicle July 14 1860

DEATH OF AN UNKNOWN MAN IN PRESTON - Mr Myres, coroner, held an inquest at the Preston Workhouse, on Wednesday last, touching the death of an unknown man. Barnaby Abbott, brewer, said that on Monday afternoon last, about four o'clock, the deceased came to the rear of the brewhouse, at the rear of the **Black Horse Inn**, belonging to the Market Tavern. He was trembling very much and complained of being cold. Put him near to the boiler in order that he might warm himself. He was in the brewhouse nearly two hours and a half, and during the whole of that time he never spoke. He did not appear to be in liquor, and seemed as if he had had a stroke. Had never seen him before. Witness gave him some warm ale. Deceased was unable to walk, he sent for a policeman to take him away. When the deceased came to the brewhouse he was on his hands and knees. – P.C. Seed said that from information he received he went to the brewhouse named, and found the deceased in a very exhausted state. He sent for a doctor and took the deceased to the police-station, where he was attended to by the doctor from the Dispensary. Brandy was given to the deceased and poultices &c. were applied. Subsequently he was taken to the workhouse. Deceased appeared to be a mechanic, and seemed to be about 45 years of age. – Other evidence was tendered to the effect that the deceased never spoke after being admitted to the workhouse; that he was duly attended to; and that he died about 12 o'clock. When he was admitted to the workhouse he had a pair of clogs on, a brown coat and a blue cap. His clothes were much worn. He was dark complexioned and had bushy whiskers. There were some slight bruises on his legs, but they were nothing of any consequence. – The jury returned an open verdict.

Preston Chronicle June 3rd 1865

The Black Horse

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A Public Whipping

It will be seen by our sessions report, that a young man named Turtington was sentenced to imprisonment and whipping, for an assault of an aggravated nature, and accordingly, on Monday at noon, the latter part of his sentence was carried into execution before an immense crowd of people in the Market Place of this town. About a hundred stripes were inflicted with considerable severity, but the culprit did not seem much worse for his mornings exercise.

Preston Pilot January 20 1827

Whipping

To the Editor of the Preston Chronicle

Sir, I attended the late Preston sessions and have read the report of trials in your paper; I have also reckoned up the number of prisoners sentenced to be whipped, and found them amounting to nearly a score. The respective ages of most of them varied from ten to twenty years, two were upwards of thirty, another was fifty years of age. I would beg to ask Sir, if this mode of punishing crime is resorted to to the same extent in other criminal courts as it is at the Preston House of Correction ? It occurs to me that such is not the case. What, then, makes flagellation so much in vogue at Preston ? It is because justice is here administered with more blood-stained severity; or because the wickedness and crime of the population of the town and neighbourhood are of a deeper enormity and require severer correction than in other places ? I declare the sound of the lash is heard in one half, or more, of the sentences which are pronounced. It is whip, whip, whip, - 'severely' whip: the treadmill and the dungeon will not satisfy justice. Cruel and barbarous infliction ! One would think that solitary confinement and hard labour was a punishment severe enough, without the lash or the scourge. I wonder the moral sense of the community will tolerate so severe a chastisement, - a chastisement which, in the palmy days of the Roman commonwealth, was reserved for slaves and bondsmen. 'I am a Roman citizen' was a security and protection from rods and stripes. And shall it be said that in England, - free, Christian, and civilised England, - no system of punishment shall avail for the correction of crime, but the use of the whiplash and the thong ? Are men, because they have sinned and done evil, - but who, notwithstanding, have still the feelings of men, and are the heirs of freedom, and the inheritors of all the glorious privileges of Christianity, to be degraded to the condition of brute beasts, and lashed like the horse and the mule, 'which have no understanding ?' I call upon you, Mr Editor, to raise your voice, and to join with me in condemning so unchristian, so unmerciful an infliction: I call upon my fellow townsmen, I call upon all the friends of humanity to record their abhorrence of it.

I remain Sir, respectfully yours,

CIVIS

Preston March 4 1843

Improved Prison Discipline – At the late sessions, although there were upward of sixty prisoners tried, not one received sentence to be whipped. It may not be generally known, that for some time past the use of the treadmill has been abolished in the Preston House of Correction; indeed, the whole of the treadmills have long since been cleared away.

Preston Chronicle May 29 1847

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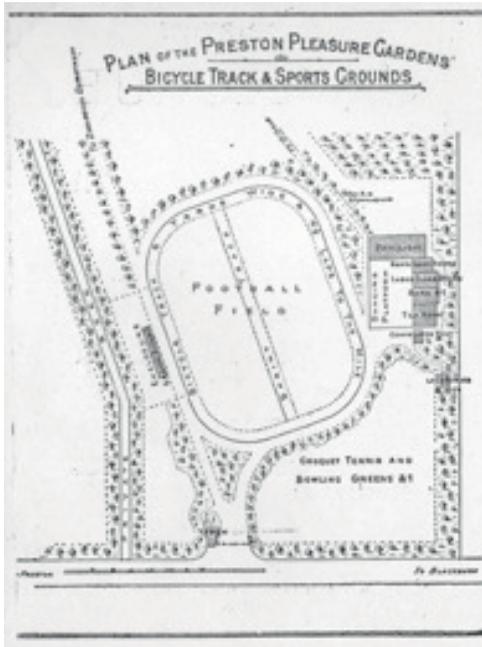
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The Preston Pleasure Gardens

The mention of The Preston Pleasure Gardens in my article about Ballooning has raised the curiosity of a number of readers and so a brief outline of the history of this part of Preston would seem timely. In June 1875 an advert was placed in the Preston papers inviting members of the public to invest in the "Preston Nursery and Pleasure Gardens Co. Ltd." at £50 per share so as to raise capital of £20,000. The intention was to purchase the business operated for some 12 years by Mr James Huddart of Farrington Hall Nursery, Ribbleton, Preston. The estate consisted of some 90 acres of land situated in Ribbleton, on the Blackburn New Road, near the Brockholes Bridge, and within two miles of the town of Preston. Whilst it was proposed to continue with the horticulture and floriculture and to offer a service the laying out of gentlemen's gardens it was also envisaged that at a future time there might be Pleasure and Recreational Gardens with pleasure boats, bowling greens, croquet and archery lawns. The area known as "The Dingle" was envisaged as an ideal location for an aviary and a fernery and it was suggested that in time there would be a restaurant and accommodation for visitors having picnics and suchlike.

The proposals attracted sufficient support to enable it to go ahead and early in 1876 the nursery was open with a seed shop at number 4 Church Street. The following year the second part of the proposal was effected and eight miles of pathways had been laid and a "Fine Gothic Entrance Lodge" was being erected beyond the cemetery railings. (*A section of the base of the lodge railings can still be seen*) Fourteen large greenhouses had been constructed in addition to a large conservatory, "probable the largest in Northern England". At Whitsuntide 1877 the



public were invited to spend their leisure time at the visiting "The Dingle", the Grand Horticultural Exhibition with the addition attraction of The Band of The Grenadier Guards and a firework display; the vision of the directors was being realised. Transport was made available from the town centre and later the horse-drawn tramway was extended from the bottom of Fishergate Hill right through to the Pleasure Gardens. Dancing on the "Monstre Open-Air Platform" was very popular with the music being provided by Greenhalgh's Brass Band or a Military Band directed by Mr Norwood. A football pitch and a cycle track were added and a licence was obtained to sell beer and wines in the refreshment area, but not on Sundays. The Royal Horticultural Society's Annual Exhibition was held in the grounds and things were looking good for the proprietors but unfortunately they couldn't depend on the elements and the Grand Gala planned for September 1878 that was to include a great

variety of performers including "Signor Jerome" the high-wire walker, "Punch and Judy" in addition to the balloon accents and fireworks was badly effected by "the most inclement weather" and proved something of a financial disaster. New spectacles were added such as a football match between the Preston Conservatives and the Preston Liberals. Surprisingly this

was a game of rugby football and after the Conservatives had replaced three “ringers” imported from Chorley, the Liberals went on to win the game. The company continued to combat the elements for a number of years but in July 1879 it was decided to wind up the “Preston Nursery and Pleasure Gardens Co. Ltd.”. The Church Street shop, plant stock and eventually the movable objects were auctioned off and the company was no more. The Gardens however continued to function under new management and with perhaps more

ambition? Following on from successful events such as the grand gala at the Whitsuntide of 1882 when 4,000 members of the public attended on the Saturday and 15,000 on the Monday the management decided that animals would be a big attraction. Jumbo the elephant was the star attraction at London Zoo until 1882 when he was by the American, P.T. Barnum, the circus owner. Hoping to echo this success they advertised in the local paper on the 11th August 1883 that Jumbo II would be at The Pleasure Gardens, “Thousands have seen him and have gone away delighted”. Jumbo II was at the Pleasure Gardens for just a couple of months but he was quickly substituted by two riding camels later in September. Whilst the pamphlet held in the Harris Library collection issued in 1884 suggests that the animal and bird collection was confined to smaller species other adverts mention wolves and even a polar bear. In June 1883 the public were informed,



“The seals have arrived”, to be fed daily. Entertainment of a sporting nature was to include boxing with Jim Mace the champion pugilist of the world taking on Slade, the Australian champion and on another occasion Billie Ellis of Preston taking a beating from Gus Porter of Manchester, but he kept smiling. 'Ohmy's Great Circus' played at the pleasure gardens in June 1889 and by 1903 The Pleasure Gardens was known by the now familiar “Farrington Park” and was operated by the Green Family well known in for their involvement with fairground and cinema entertainment. Further research is required for the following years but in 1925 Preston Grasshoppers took on a lease from Messers Horrocks Crewson and though it was an unsatisfactory ground they remained there for nine seasons. In 1929 they sub-let part of the grounds for use as a motorcycle speedway track. Some time ago Paul Baron wrote the history of “Farrington Park, Forgotten Pleasures” which offers a great deal of information about this era. Racing started on the 19th April 1929 with a crowd of some 20,000



spectators, some having made us of the holes in the inadequate fencing. After only two seasons it was realised that the project was not viable and the lease was sold. In the mid-thirties the majority of the land was given over to housing with only “The Dingle” remaining to this day. A job creation scheme in 1977 battled to restore that remaining area, removing some 23 washing machines along with other household rubbish and it now forms part of the Brockholes Nature Reserve.

Pete Vickers

A short history of a long winter (1838)



The winter seems culminating in one, horrid chaos of frost, snow and ice, which has now existed for fifteen days and nights, without intermission. In most of the large towns of the kingdom societies for the relief of the indigent and destitute are established. Appeal made to Preston to follow the example. For several days accidents from the slippery state of the roads, have been of continual occurrence; the bursting of steam boilers, of canals &c. was deplorable. Coaches from henceforth, were stopped; and dismal rumours had circulated that such had to be dug out of the snow, northwards; and the Liverpool Mail even was said to have been dug out of the snow, beyond Lancaster, with missing guard, and passengers in sorry plight. And now came the crowning climax! On Saturday morning (the 20th) the thermometer had stood at only 12 degrees; and at half past seven am; at Taylor's Gardens, bottom of Fishergate, near the river, the thermometer was 2 degrees below zero. On this Sunday, soon after day-dawn, a preternatural and lurid light overspread the heavens.

Hundreds were on the river, and some ludicrous contretemps occurred, the writer of these lines, not wholly escaping. Towards noon, a great rush was made by about fifty skaters, flying from Marsh-ward, who had reached a point opposite Penwortham Wood. J. C.... the Prescot postman, (but now no more) was amongst this posse of racers; his was no child's play at skating; he was, besides, six feet two, in his stockings; and, as we were timidly essaying of first skating trial, in the opposite direction, we unluckily became entangled in the 'ruck' and were run full butt into by the gigantic figure of C.... Down, down, of course there was no help for it, legs and skates held high in the air – for the two of us falling affected by progress of all beyond, and a heap of tumble-down skaters lay sprawling, almost helpless. Cuts and tears innumerable, of course, followed this funny affair; and we had the gratification, of extricating ourself from the confused mass, to find that C....'s skate-point had cleanly cut open, or ripped up, our handsome new black pants, from ankle to hip, so we put in a pin or two, and made things pleasant after the unlucky venture: many a laugh rang round, and after 'staying a little

longer' we thought it wisdom to beat a hasty retreat, being Sunday, and in such a plight too, and arrived at our lodgings in Fishergate, only just in time to escape the notice of the good people returning from church. In the afternoon of this day, a cold and icy rain fell, which froze as it reached the ground, the 'frozen rain' of the Polar regions. The streets and roads throughout the town and country were now in the last degree fraught with danger to both man and horse, obliged to use locomotion. We ourselves had to attend a social tea party in a distant part of town. After making up from our accident in the morning, donned our best 'bib and tucker' and, accompanied by our sweetheart, a lady then in her teens, we essayed the journey; but it was not without sundry slips, and many odd devices such as – sticking by walls, or holding to one another, that we at last arrived safely at our destination. As for our friend, Jack Grad'ell, one of the skaters of the morning, we afterwards learned that, on his return from the Ribble, in company with several companions, he was dropped on by the 'frozen rain', and, on reaching home, with one or two of his companions, absolutely durst not pull off his new coat; it was a frozen mass; he was afraid as he expressed it, that the coat would 'break' across the back and the arms 'snap' off – like so much glass, such was the keen and subtle nature of the frost; and it was not until our hero hit upon the expedient of standing before a blazing fire that he and the others could safely denude themselves of their frozen garments, by the gradually increasing warmth, which caused the steam and water to ooze from them as though they had just emerged from a vapour bath !

Many were the accidents that to life and limb occurred, throughout nearly the whole country on the memorable night of that Sunday – January 21st. Horses were scarcely able to stand or keep their legs – vehicles slipped with the sloping of the road and pedestrians were in numerous instances sorely reminded of their 'fallen state. In the streets the pavements were like glass; The remorseful winter' as a friend observed 'paid little regard to the proud' for the high were soon low; and to the philosophic observer a constant strain of reflections was obviously derivable from the 'ups and downs of life' to be observed about him'.

The frozen rain of the day preceding led to a partial thaw during the night and this day, the effects of which were somewhat disastrous at the North Union Railway Bridge, then in course of construction. The fifteen days frost had caused a great quantity of ice to accumulate in the Ribble, near to the railway bridge. An immense mass of ice lay in a series of pools from Walton Bridge to Penwortham Bridge. The masses of ice began to break on Monday morning; about noon the mass between Walton Bridge and the Tramroad Bridge, thickened by the sheets which escaped at intervals from the rapids up the river, broke from its hold with a loud crash, and floated, layer over layer, down the river, until it reached the Tramroad Bridge, where, being intercepted, it again found a lodgement, and was stayed more than two hours. The loud and repeated breakings gave signal of another general movement. This was understood, and the clerk of the bridge-works was warned of the impending danger. After the ice had been stayed at the Tramroad Bridge for two hours, the great weight of the body of ice, which had increased in volume nearly three-fold since starting, forced it forward opposite

Jackson's-gardens, where it remained until eight o'clock in the evening. Workmen had been for hours stationed on the bridge, in terror of the expected shock: it came; the break, the crash, were so terrific, that the men in vain tried to hear the orders that were from time to time issued to them. The speed of the floating mass was five miles an hour; without any 'fresh' to impel it. The bridge stands in an oblique position with respect to the current, the shock upon it was, therefore, the more severe and direct. The ice was raised by the collision by eight to ten feet above the waters of the river, and the force with which the collision took place were tremendous. The pressure occasioned by the great weight of water, and the large masses of ice borne on the current, did serious damage to the operations of the bridge. The great quantity of piling and woodwork of the centres in the river, with the piers of the arches, and the sustaining timbers of the temporary bridge, all tended to obstruct, and there was great devastation. Upwards of 100 feet of the railway service-bridge was entirely carried away. The whole of the 'service-line' to the southern shore was crippled, and had to be entirely re-constructed before the main works could proceed, which involved serious loss of time and money. At this time might be seen old men and women, and the timid generally, 'feeling their way' along the slippery streets and causeways, with old stockings drawn over their shoes, or woollen 'list' wrapped round, to render their progress more sure, and to prevent falling. Young bachelors and maidens, all, in fact, in single blessedness, for warmth in bed at nights, took off the sheets, and after rolling themselves in the blankets, could defy the cold, and sleep warm and securely. The machinery in some of the cotton mills of this town and neighbourhood stood still this (Monday) morning, as the hands coming from a distance could not possibly get to their work in consequence of the slippery state of the roads. It were, indeed, vain to attempt a description of the novel scenes witnessed on the occasion; some rolled off the road onto the ice of a neighbouring river; whilst the situation of several females, who unfortunately fell and were exposed to the weather, was anything but enviable. Centres of three of the arches of the bridge are still in jeopardy. The frost again sets in with great force towards the night. Broken sheets of ice from Walton Bridge and the rapids again form themselves into a picturesque and general mass – an immense field of ice, in cumbrous heaps, detached and broken – lodged on the eastern side of the bridge – average thickness from three to four feet. Should the succeeding thaw be rapid, or there be a fall of snow or rain, a disastrous land flood must follow. The spring-tides commence on Thursday evening, which will, it is calculated, reach the bridge some time on Saturday. May 'lift' the ice east of the bridge, break it into small divisions, which may float back with the tides, and apprehension subside. Every precaution which art can devise taken to meet any emergency; parts of woodwork likely to be cut by the ice have been sheathed with iron; main bearing piles strengthened to the greatest possible extent.

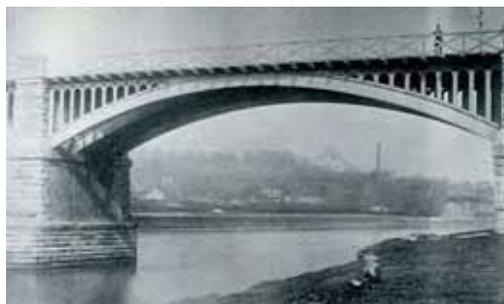
Preston Chronicle Feb 8th 1868

continued next month

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The Bamber Bridge and Preston Extension (cont.)

Engineers Errington and Meek, however, had every confidence in the structure and to prove it they travelled across both the viaduct and Ribble bridge with a test train on August 15th, 1850. The train consisted of two of the company's heaviest locomotives and a considerable number of open wagons laden with earth. After several such crossings, the masonry was examined, and found to be satisfactory. The viaduct began to show signs of subsidence some years after the line was opened (this was probably due to heavier axle-loads) and many of the piers had to be braced with iron tie-bars and flanges.



The undulating structure was eventually converted to an embankment in 1883, at a considerable cost to the new owners, the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway (LYR); they had indeed inherited a nightmare. The masonry itself remained in situ and was filled in for the most part with mining slag, hard clay rubble and rubbish from local tips, all blinded with layers of sand, cinders and gravel. It is rumoured that some of the infill came from the excavations at Lostock Hall engine shed site.

The Ribble bridge was a magnificent structure and worthy complement to Charles Vignoles' five arched masterpiece in stone, further downstream. It comprised four stone piers with brick panels carrying three 100 ft. arched iron spans over the river;

These were segmented iron pattern with open spandrels, cornice and blocking, which gave a total weight of just over 500 tons. The ironwork was supervised by Mr John Harrison, who was the agent for Messrs. Butler and Co. of Stannington, near Leeds, the work being completed on January 27, 1850. The piers on either bank had a thickness of 15 ft. 6 ins. And incorporated semi-circular brick arches, each having a span of 25 ft, and trimmed with stone quoins, voussoirs and copings.

One of the terms of agreement laid down by the Corporation was that provision be made for a public right of way across the river, the viaduct was therefore fitted with cantilever brackets on the east side, upon which a narrow footpath was constructed. Access to the path on the North bank was by way of a steep flight of 40 steps, which followed the winged wall at 90 degrees to the bridge; and the south end was accessed by another flight of stone steps, keyed-in to the bridge masonry at the top and facing south, with halfway landing supported on a brick pier. It was later reversed at the landing into a dog-leg pattern when the viaduct was filled in. The iron spans were replaced with an ugly steel girder and plate structure by the London Midland and Scottish (LMS) railway in 1930.

Taken from 'The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway around Preston' by Bob Gregson - ISBN 9780956518453

Continued next month

A New Lease Of Life

The English country church has always held an attraction for my wife and I and on our frequent journeys into the countryside we almost always end up exploring one. A couple of years ago after one such visit, I got to thinking what the most important object in a church was. Was it the Altar upon which the ritual of the sacrificial mass is carried out? or the Pulpit from which the priest extols the message of Christ to his flock? it could even be the Stained Glass windows whose brightly coloured images depicting biblical scenes, caught the eyes of the beholders long before photography was invented, but in my opinion it was none of these. The most important object, which is found surprisingly at the back of, or in a side chapel of the church, is the Font. My reasoning behind this is that unlike Nationality one is not born a Christian but becomes one through Baptism so without Baptism there would be no Christians and therefore the church would not exist.

Having reached this conclusion my thoughts turned to Fonts of significance within my family. I realised that the Font in which my mother was baptised lay in St Augustine's Church Preston which was in the process of being demolished (except for the front facade) and converted into a Community Centre. I resolved to find out the Font's fate. Visiting the church I found it at an advanced Stage of re development but in a open shed by the Presbytery I discovered sections of what turned out to be the Font scattered about. Enquiries yielded information to the effect that after restoration it was intended to incorporate the Font in landscaped grounds adjacent to the Centre. Ending up as a garden ornament exposed to the elements and possible vandalism, was not my idea of a fitting end to the churches most important object.



September 2005 saw the Community Centre opened but there was no sign of the Font being removed from its unsafe storage. Checking last Autumn I found the shed empty and the Font nowhere to be seen. My immediate concern was assuaged when told that due to local problems and at the request of Rev Dunstan Cooper a one time parishioner and now curate of St Marys Morecambe it had been re sited there.

My wife and I visited St Marys recently and received a warm welcome from Father Dunstan who revealed that not only had he been baptised in the Font but also his mother had. St Marys although surrounded by buildings still retains a certain dignity, which is further enhanced by the colourful statue Of Our Lady of Lourdes in front of the adjacent Presbytery.

Upon entering this light, warm and peaceful haven we were very pleased to find the Font not at the back but in pride of place fully restored in front of the chancel.

Before leaving I lit a candle to the Font, on behalf of all the people who through it had found Hope in their moments of Despair.

H Walmsley (January 2007)

Footnote: I drove home reflecting on the attendance figures of some 300 a week given me by Father Duncan, comparing them to the 3290 as given by Atticus the historian for St Augustine's in the 19th century.



Proud of Preston Belisama:

**Proud of Preston heed my entry
Here the voice of ancient memories
Hearts purloined by Roman sentries
Like a river shining bright**

**Proud of Preston born free traders
Made by commerce and hard labour
Merchants gilded artists favored
Like the Brigantes warred in tribes**

**Mechanics shift the scene of battle
Raise the red brick smog industrial
Cording hearts like twisting material
On the wheels of the cotton lords**

**Step the Chartists to the engines
Pull the plugs release the tension
The rioters face the sentries
Dye the river dark with blood**

**Grey arise the business faceless
Fake fulfilment for the faithless
Mass the market for the tasteless
Selling life for capital.**

**High in the stone fortress
The sentries hold their rule
Beyond the mall and office
Do you hear a river call ?**

**Proud of Preston I have carved you
In my sweeping spirit formed you
Through your veins floods dazzling water
My Setantii shining bright**

**Will you harken to my entry
Drown false dreams in ancient memories
Will the proud of Preston
Like a shining river rise ?**

A Preston Lad

As I have stated I loved school, I put my all into it and came out top of the class every year. I even skipped one class, then found it hard work as I did not know what decimal and fractions were.

Apart from Daddy Sykes we had a good bunch of teachers. In the infant classes, Miss Hall, Miss Travis and Miss Jones. In Standard One and Two, Miss Shorthouse, Three and Four, Miss Milner, Five and Six, Daddy Anson. Top class Daddy Sykes who was replaced by Daddy



Brown as headmaster, then followed by Daddy Lamb from Lancaster. Others came and went except Miss Milner who remained a fixture. There was Mr Smithies who played rugby for the Northern Nomads. Miss Clements who could not sound the letter 's', so stop became 'top', step out 'tep out', stand up 'tand up' and sit down became 'TIT DOWN'. All the boys would deliberately do orders the wrong way round or late in unison so she made us do it again. I mean, TIT DOWN, it was hilarious, but for all that she was stern and we held her in awe.

School punishment was universal I think in all schools, stay in after school or miss football on Thursday afternoons for being late often. Mild expletives classed as swearing would warrant mouth washed out with carbolic soap. Disobedience, fighting, etc, six of the best, with the cane. We scholars had the misplaced idea, that crushed mica or celluloid or a hair out of a horse's tail, would diminish the pain or break the stick in two. The look of triumph in the teacher's eye if he spotted the ruse, he laid in on even harder.

Occasionally some boy's father would come into school swearing hell and high water what he would do 'if you touch my lad again'. But oft not if you complained to your parents you got another clout with the words that you had not been punished for nothing. Same with the police, if it warranted it, you got a punch up the backside or a swipe round the earhole, sometimes the Flying Squad came after you, they rode bikes !

Any vulgarity detected by the teacher, resulted in the headmaster taking you into the cloakroom, down with your pants, bent you over the map drawer and whacked your bare posterior with a cane. Wow, that hurt !

School hours were nine till twelve, then two o'clock till half past four. The Infant School, which was mixed could go home at four o'clock. The crescendo of noise when school was loosed was horrendous, as everyone wore clogs with iron cokers on the sole and heels, girls and boys alike. Only three boys at St Mary's out of the whole school wore shoes, Joe Calvert, brother of the famous trumpeter in later years. George Moss, whose dad owned the cycle shop and Noel Holland, whose father was licensee of the Rosebud Hotel. Joe Calvert's grandfather owned a shoe shop.

I think landlords were not short of a few shekels, because Mr Stan Eatson, who was mine host at The County Arms, always placed a ten shilling note in the collection plate every Sunday, and paid pew rent.

When I left school and started work on a farm I worked seventy two hours, seven days a week, for a meagre five shillings and board and lodgings, so I got the same overall that this man could afford in collection money. A pillar of the church, no doubt, shades of rich men and eyes of needles. However I stray, I was relating about school wasn't I.

After prayers and Daddy Sykes favourite hymn 'The roseate dew of early morn' had been sung, everyone had to stand up on their forms and the headmaster walked up and down the rows to examine the front and backs of our clogs, to see if they were polished enough, then on terra firma we held out our hands and bent over to show the backs of our necks. All culprits with dirty necks and mucky hands filed into the cloakroom where a scrubbing brush was wielded with gusto and carbolic soap applied. Sometimes their skin was almost raw. Dirty clogs, the guilty ones stayed in half an hour after school.

Thursday afternoon was sports day, we played football or cricket in its season, from two till four thirty. The school colours were amber and black. Our venue was Waverly Park, our home ground. The orphanage provided the older boys with football boots, but I was never picked to play for the first eleven, as my forte was cricket. I was made captain of the second eleven by virtue of being top boy in class, and was allowed to pick the team. I cheated, Tommy Nicholson could not play football for toffee, but he gave me a two pence as a bribe, so he played regularly.

Last time I saw him was in the sixties, smartly dressed, homberg hat, horn rimmed glasses and driving a company car. He was a rep for Woods Tobacco manufacturers. I was on my moped doing my rounds as an insurance agent.

Preston Pensioners

In Preston, for many years past, the pensioners residing in the town and neighbourhood, who have fought either at Waterloo, or in the arduous Peninsular Campaign, have been annually regaled at a sumptuous repast liberally provided by the subscriptions of the gentlemen of the district. The veterans on such occasions have usually been honoured with the attendance of some of our townsmen. It had been known for some time past that the gallant Napier had kindly promised to honour this year's festival with his presence, and this distinction, which so great a man has condescended to bestow upon the feast, gave unusual interest to it. But nowhere was there such lively satisfaction felt at the prospect of this additional grace to be added to the festive board than in the breasts of the old pensioners. Many of them had fought with 'brave old Charlie' and all had learned to venerate and love his name; for he is as well known as 'the soldier's friend' as he is by the term of 'the Conqueror of Scinde'.



At an early hour in the morning the veterans were astir, bearing upon their breasts their various medals, many of them having numerous bars and clasps. They were a varied class – many infirm or decrepit, others still active and apparently ready to 'fight their battles o'er again'. All appeared in capital spirits, determined to enjoy to the utmost of their powers, a day the recurrence of which they hailed with pleasure, and which bought to their recollection brave deeds and brave names, their memory held most dear. From the tower of the Parish Church rang forth merry peals, and there floated also from the flagstaff, the royal standard, in honour of the day; and in other ways there were indications of a holiday among at least one class of the community.

The pensioners mustered at Deepdale Road near the House of Recovery, awaiting the arrival of Sir Charles Napier from the Barracks. On his approach they formed in line, and greeted the veteran with several cheers. On the carriage stopping, Mrs Cooper presented a new colour, prepared for the occasion, and presented it to the Pensioners of Preston, which was received by Mr Bryron, one of that body. Upon this, Mr German addressed to the assembled veterans a brief and appropriate address expressive to the compliment paid to them by so handsome a present, remarking that he knew they would value it highly and preserve it unsullied. It was then proudly unfurled, and the veterans, headed by the band of the 50th regiment, which then came up, had it borne before them, and they thus marched in an orderly procession through the town. They closed their march, about five o'clock, at the Corn Exchange, where to the number of above four hundred, they sat down in the large room.

The rooms were decorated with elegance graceful festoons of evergreens and flowers ornamenting the walls with many other appropriate adornments. On the veterans being seated, the Mayor, Sir Charles Napier and other distinguished guests entered the room. The gallant general's entrance was the signal for many rounds of hearty cheering, the band playing 'See the conquering Hero comes'. Sir Charles was evidently gratified with his reception. The gallant veteran wore the full dress of a lieutenant-general, with the star and ribbon of the Knight Grand Cross of the Bath, a peninsular medal, and two Indian medals.

Preston Chronicle June 19 1852

Penwortham

Priory
ACADEMY



Dorothy Croston nee Ellis,
cuts the cake to start the
60th Celebration year
at Priory in Preston.



Priory's 60th Anniversary Celebration

Calling all ex-pupils of Priory

On Friday 12th July we will be holding a Gala Dinner of reminiscences at the school. Tables can be booked for the hot supper with a guest speaker. You can link up with old friends and share memories.

We invite groups to book a table of 8 or 12 for their year and then use this as a great opportunity to revisit old times at Priory.

Contact the school for further information
Telephone: 01772 320250





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