

# The Preston Magazine



**Issue 8**

**Feb/March 2013**

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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](mailto: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.

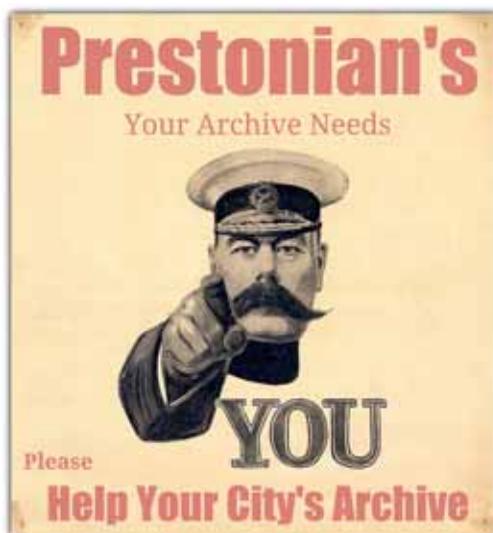
At present the upper date range is 1990. We also try and confine the general geographical area to Preston, Penwortham, Fulwood, Grimsargh, Walton le Dale, Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall.

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



# Welcome

Welcome to the 8th issue of The Preston Magazine which is a combined Feb/March edition, we hope you will enjoy. 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](http://www.priory.lancs.sch.uk) you can also access The Preston Magazine via [www.blogpreston.co.uk](http://www.blogpreston.co.uk)

Many thanks to our guest writers, Steve Halliwell, Peter Vickers, Bob Gregson and new this month David Huggonson's series. 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. Also new this month is one about growing up in the Harris Orphanage by Miss Andy Anderton.

Christine Jaritz Wilson has submitted her poem, 'Once upon a Time' which is based on memories of growing up in The Cottage in Belmont Avenue, Ribbleson during the 40's. Christine who lives in Penwortham is a member of Preston Poets Society.

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

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 by Heather Crook – the landmark home of PC Carpets at the top of Lune Street/Fishergate

Regards, Heather

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## **PLEASE SUPPORT OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES**

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**Shrovetide** – Yesterday was Shrove Tuesday, when as usual, pancakes are largely partaken by all classes. Pancakes or fritters as they were sometimes called in old times are the acknowledged dish for Shrovetide; the connection being so recognised. As with many other matters the name of the day has survived its applicability. Shrive or Shrove Tuesday was the day in ancient times when people shrieved themselves, that is, confessed their sins, and to call them to this act of religious duty, the bells in the churches rang at ten or eleven o'clock in the morning. In many parishes the ringing of the bell in the forenoon of Shrove Tuesday is continued but instead of being the call to church it is looked on as the signal for beginning to fry pancakes. While we keep up the custom of making the favourite cake associated with the day, we have, in some respects, improved upon our ancestors in having abandoned the barbarous practice of throwing at cocks and fighting them, which was long practised at Shrovetide, even at schools.  
Preston Chronicle February 16th 1861

**Dole** – Yesterday being Candlemas day the 'Knox Folly' charity of £5 was distributed in sums of 2s 6d, each to forty four widows, at the office of Mr. M. Myres, Winckley-street.  
Preston Chronicle Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> 1855

**St Valentine's Day** – Young people, wrapped up in love, and on the single side of connubial humanity appear to be as fond as ever of St Valentine. This year, notwithstanding the badness of the times, and the evanescence of money, the shrine of St Valentine's has been thronged with devotees, and there have been a great plethora in the matter of epistolary moonshine. Sunday last, was the 'Saint-day'; but those fond of spending their money in valentines did not let the flame of their 'finer' feelings consume respect for the postman and the Sabbath; they despatched the principal portion of their missives on Friday, for delivery on Saturday and on Sunday night, for distribution on Monday. In Preston between Saturday morning and Monday, nearly twelve thousand extra letters – valentines, no doubt – were posted and delivered in Preston. Many of the letters came from country districts.  
Preston Chronicle February 20th 1864

**Presentations to Short-timers** – A few days ago Messrs. Horrockses, Miller and Co. made their customary half-yearly presentation of prizes to such of the short-timers in connection with their establishment as had they distinguished themselves during the previous half year by progress and good conduct, at St. Pauls National School. The prizes consisted of books, workboxes, ladies companions, &c., of an entertaining, tasteful and useful character. The presentations were made by Mr Miller, in presence of Mrs Miller and other members of the family, a circumstance, which imparted additional interest to the event, and, no doubt, materially enhanced the value of the gifts in the estimation of the young people. We venture to hope that the wellknown solicitude of Messrs. Horrockses, Miller and Co., for the welfare of their work people, will in this as in all other instances, be properly appreciated.  
Preston Chronicle February 21st 1863

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# **PRESTON NEW VICTORIA CINEMA AND ARTS CENTRE**

The New Victoria Cinema was built for Provincial Cinematograph Theatres and opened on 17th September 1928 showing silent films with an orchestra and live theatre performances as well as a restaurant. Designed by architect W.E. Trent in the art deco style of the golden era of cinema-going, extra effort was made to create colourful architecturally pleasing interiors, giving audiences a sense of occasion and escape during dark days of the 1930's. Built on a hill, it is an enormous building all accessed via a modest yet prominent façade with its bright white terracotta blocks.

Originally it had one large auditorium with 2,120 seats and a Wurlitzer cinema organ which was one of the first to be installed in the United Kingdom. The auditorium was decorated in a neo-classical design with an oriental frieze on each of the anti-proscenium walls and the ceiling was dominated by an enormous dome which housed the projection room. The entrance hall foyer had a smaller dome with a chandelier suspended from its central skylight. On the first floor was a magnificent restaurant overlooking Miller Arcade and above that was the manager's private apartment.

In 1954 it was renamed the Gaumont and in 1962 the Odeon. Then the auditorium was divided in two by extending the upper floor to create a 1229-seat cinema and the lower floor into a separate ballroom and concert suite that opened the following year and became a nightclub years later. Most of the original detail survives although covered by false ceilings and walls but the oriental friezes were lost due to demolition. In 1970, the former restaurant was converted into another cinema with 100 seats. The cinema closed in September 1992 following Preston Guild and has stood unused but still retaining its 1200 seats.

Now the plan is to restore it in order to develop an independent cinema and live performance space, art and craft studios, exhibition gallery, meeting rooms, conference facilities and a café. It will improve the status and availability of arts in the city and engage the community in using, running and owning the building situated on Church Street in the city centre opposite Miller Arcade and the Harris Museum and Art Gallery.

The committee is actively seeking funding to buy the site and then will be operated by the Preston New Victoria Limited company with charitable status overseen by trustees and run by voluntary Friends of Preston New Victoria. Anyone is invited to join the Friends to generate income with events and activities at [friendsofprestonnewvictoria@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofprestonnewvictoria@gmail.com) or phone 0753 506 8896 with your suggestions and ideas (and leave your name, postal address, home and mobile phone numbers if you wish).

# **The Black Horse**

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# LET'S GET CARRIED AWAY

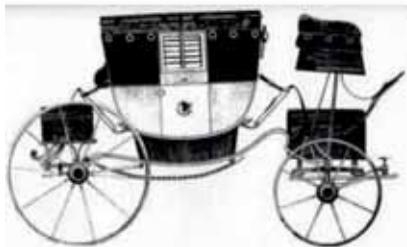
## *In the way it used to be done*

A look at some of the carriages of yesterday.



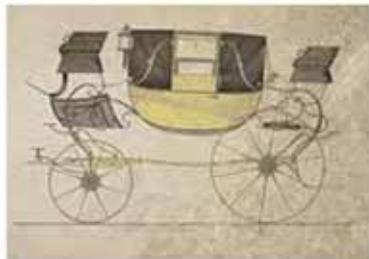
**HACKNEY COACH.** This term derives its name from the French "*haquenee*" meaning 'horse for hire'. The hackney coach or cab made its first appearance in London almost 400 years ago in 1625, making themselves available at the major inns. The first of their kind were one-horse vehicles with a primitive springless box. Later Hackney coaches were often the discarded carriages of the gentry. Even these became shabby and dirty in their use as such, but still often bore their previous owner's faded coat of arms.

**STAGE-COACH.** The early development of efficient wheeled transport was encouraged by the improved road surfaces of the turnpikes. Earlier models had little in the way of suspension, and accommodation for passengers was cramped. Some were even unfortunate enough to sit on the roof with their legs dangling over the side. Sprung axles were introduced in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, had more luggage space, and were altogether more comfortable.



**POST-CHAISE.** Sometimes referred to as a Chay or Shay. Again the name is derived from the French '*chaise*' meaning 'chair'... It was a 2- or 4- wheeled carriage that was intended for either travel or pleasure use. The two-wheeled, one horse version was often called a Gig, and had a body that was hung on leather straps. The Post-chaise was a fast carriage for carrying mail in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some of the four-wheeled models were drawn by four horses.

**LANDAU.** This word is simply a coach-building term for a four-wheeled, convertible carriage. They are light-weight and suspended on elliptical springs. It was named after the German city of that name, where they were first produced. The first English Landaus were first produced in the 1830's. They were social carriages, drawn by four horses, and had facing seats and a dropped floor-well. They reached their full development in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and were strictly town or city carriages of a luxurious character.





**PHAETON.** This was the early 19<sup>th</sup> century term for an open, sporty carriage, drawn by a single horse, or occasionally a pair. Typically they had four extravagantly large wheels, were very lightly sprung, with a very small body, fast and dangerous. So dangerous, in fact, that it was named after the disastrous ride of the mythical Phaeton, the son of Helios, who nearly set the earth on fire while attempting to drive the chariot of the sun. There were several models of Phaetons, some rather larger.

**BROUGHAM.** Pronounced "broom" or "brohm", was a light, four-wheeled horse drawn carriage from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It had an enclosed body with two doors. It sat two people, often with two fold-away seats in the front corners, and with a box-seat in front for the driver, and also a footman or additional passenger. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Broughams were often sold off as Hackney Carriages.



**CHARABANC or 'CHAR-A-BANC'.** This was a type of horse-drawn vehicle, usually open-topped, that were common during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, there were some early motor vehicles that went by the same name. They were especially popular for sight-seeing or outings to the countryside or seaside, that were popularly arranged by businesses for their employees, and social groups of all types. Once more the name is derived from the French '*char à bancs*' meaning "carriage with wooden benches," the carriage having originated in France in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**The "PLOUGH TAVERN" Orchard Street, Preston.** In the early 1900's, charabancs were a key part in the public house outing. Here we see a large group of (mainly) men, preparing to set off on a country jaunt. Often these outings fringed the Bowland Forest, returning via Garstang, where a 'splendid repast' would be enjoyed at the Royal Oak Inn in that town. On other occasions, visits would be made to the Fylde coast from Fleetwood round to Lytham.



This brief look at some of the carriages of yesteryear was by Steve Halliwell, local pub historian

More stories relating to Preston's Old Inns, Taverns and Beer-houses can be found at

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

## **A Short History Of A Long Winter (1838) Part Two**

Sat 3 Feb. Canals still frozen, and transit of goods impeded. Great pressure from mass of ice between Walton Bridge and the Railway Bridge. Many precautions adopted to prevent disastrous results.

Sun 4 Feb. A curious circumstance occurred: a quantity of wild swans, about twenty eight in number, come up to Longton Marsh, driven doubtless by the severity of the weather. They were closely pursued by several of the villagers, but after having led their pursuers a chase considerably past Naze Point, they made off to sea.

Mon 5 Feb. The frost continues keenly.

Wed 7 Feb. A 'thaw' at length set in today, without doing any serious damage to the works at the railway bridge, notwithstanding the immense quantity of ice lodged in the pool of the river between Walton Bridge and the new erection. There was a general breaking up of the ice in the evening; the effect produced by the simultaneous detachment of the massed, and the action of the current upon them, was awfully beautiful and sublime. There was a great quantity of 'fresh' in the river, and the immense fragments of ice were borne towards the sea at about the rate of five miles per hour.

Thurs 8 Feb. This morning very little ice was to be seen, and all apprehension of danger was at an end. Some damage done to the Tram-road Bridge, and traffic was impeded for several hours. At Walton Bridge the struggling of the ice with water produced a magnificent effect. – 'Murphy's Weather Almanack' fails in its prediction of the thaw.

Sat 10 Feb. Trade expected to 'look up' should the 'thaw' continue.

Sun 11 Feb. The thaw seems to 'hang'; a return to severe weather more than probable.

Mon 12 Feb. Frost returns and is severe. Navigation again stopped. Little hope of trade reviving.

Tues 13 Feb. The afternoon mail from Preston to Warrington meets with an accident, through the frozen state of the roads, whilst proceeding through Walton-le-Dale. Carriers can't traverse the roads with their carts; great accumulation of goods in consequence.

Sat 17 Feb. Snow this morning. The rare phenomenon of 'crystallised snow' was again witnessed. Each flake that fell was in the shape of a complete star of five, six, seven or eight points, of the most beautiful and regular formation – a circumstance of very rare occurrence in our temperate climate, and seldom seen but in the Arctic regions. In consequence of the exceedingly severe weather, the masons were unable to work the stone for the arches of the North Union Railway Bridge. No progress made for several weeks now in covering the centres. This department of the railway-works, from the continuance of the frost, may be said to have been at a standstill. 'Murphy' prophecies a continuance of the frost.

Sun 18 Feb. Today, notwithstanding the great quantity of snow on the ice, several hundred persons enjoyed themselves on the Ribble with the healthy exercise of skating. About four o'clock the 'sport' was disturbed by a fight between two young 'roughs' which caused much commotion, and also danger, with the crowd congregating on one spot. The combatants punished each other severely, and fought in the brutal Lancashire fashion, one knocking the other one down, and kicking him over the face, head, &c. Police came to the fray, and walked the principals off.

Tues 20 Feb. Contributions to the distressed poor commence at the Corn Exchange. Relief in brown bread, potatoes, sheets, stockings &c., doled out.

Sat 24 Feb. Trade dull and will so continue till the breaking up of the frost. Operations at the North Union Railway Bridge all suspended during the week, through the frost. An immense quantity of ice is lodged on the eastern side of the bridge, great fears are entertained as to consequences when the thaw comes. Great precautions are reported to and to prevent havoc and injury.

Sunday 25 Feb. The thaw commences. The immense quantity of ice that had accumulated on the river during the last frost, broke up through the united influence of thaw and tide. Great apprehension of danger to the Railway Bridge, many thinking it would be brought down altogether. At the hours of one and five pm, immense bodies of ice were forced along the river by the fresh, and roared through the structure with a thundering noise, horrible to hear. No great damage was done, providentially. The 'Lord Exmouth' coach, today, arrived in Lancaster seven hours behind the usual time, in consequence of heavy falls of snow in the north nearly all week. The 'mail' and other coaches have also been behind time for some days past. Works on the Preston and Wyre Railway nearly all stopped for some time, till better weather comes. Great distress of the labouring population throughout the whole country.

Sat 3 Mar. Weather bitter, with a fear of a return to hard frost.

Mon 5 Mar. Partial resumption of labour on the railways commences, so long suspended by the inclemency of the weather. Men busily engaged on Ribble Bridge supplying a substitute to the service-bridge – washed down by the late floods and ice.

Sat 10 Mar. Mem - on Birds. On Monday and Tuesday some rare birds fly from the regions northwards, through the horridly-severe weather there. A fine wild swan shot by Mr Whiteside of Poulton, a large heron shot at Treales; one of those rare birds the red-breasted goosander, a cormorant, a crested duck, and many other birds. These arrived at Mr Sharples, reed-maker, Duke-street to be stuffed. Last week also, Mr Crook of Salmesbury, shot in the village a fine specimen of the 'speckled diver' doubtless driven on these shores by the stress of the weather. The appearance of this rare bird in this country is – 'like angels visits, few and far between' Mr Gilbertson purchased it for Institution Museum. Mem - on Roses – Roses throughout the land have suffered to an extent never known before. The mild weather excited them at Christmas and they looked as in April. All are cut off and their green and flourishing state is changed to blackness and desolation; buds all gone, heads black, and stalks alone left alive.

Mon 12 Mar. During last week, many canals were opened, and traffic partially resumed. The predictions of the 'Weather Almanack' for the first 48 days of the present year were found to have failed in 17 cases out of 24 ! Yet this production the public bought up at a high price by the hundred thousand ! the demand had been so urgent, the public impatience so irrepressible, that the shop of the bookseller (like those of bakers in a famine) was under the protection of the police, so violent was the demand of the thousands who flocked to obtain it.

Wed 14 Mar. Faint traces of spring begin to appear. The contractors of the Preston end of the North Union Railway put upwards of eight hundred men on the works. The line is expected to open at Preston in August.

Spring

Tues 20 Mar. The vernal equinox brings us excessive cold and darkness, and bitter gales. A gale today of terrific violence came on early in the forenoon, from the south-west; greatest intensity towards middle of the day – slight abatement towards evening, wind chopping to the westward. Damage sustained in the town. Fearful disasters may be apprehended at sea.

**Preston Chronicle February 8<sup>th</sup> 1868**

## A Preston Lad

Living a young life devoid of any love, understanding or compassion, as I did, there was of course a certain amount of good times. Children are very resilient, live one day to another and learn to sway with the wind. Therefore I will dwell on better times I experienced.

After Christmas the next occasion to look forward to was Shrove Tuesday. We attended school, no holiday, our teachers earned their pay back in the twenties. The Roaring Twenties they were called, the only roaring we heard was Miss Hall's voice demonishing us. I digress once more !

Dinnertime ! Pancakes ! Lovely pancakes ! After a hearty lunch, three or four of the luscious flat concoctions, smothered in syrup or dredged in castor sugar. We also got one more at teatime. Some boys bragged they had eaten twelve. Big fat Seymour Milray said he ate twenty, mind you he was of Billy Bunter proportions. There was another annual event, that wasn't particularly pleasant. Exciting yes, funny no ! It was peculiar to the boys in the seven to fourteen year old range. 'P or C day' it was called. I think it was on the 17<sup>th</sup> March, St Patricks Day. It lasted from eight in the morning till eight at night. This is what transpired. All boys on the said day turned out armed with whips, before school started, the bigger the better. You made your own if you could not afford to buy one. Take a strong stick, burn a hole at one end with a fine poker, red hot, of course. Thread through a leather clog lace and attach a thick piece of string to the lace to act as a lash. You made sure you were in a gang, you never wanted to be caught alone. The idea was if you met anyone else, en route, no many how many or how little the opposing group consisted of, a challenge was issued.

'P or C !' and one waited with baited breath for the answer. A word of enlightenment, P or C meant Protestant or Catholic, and if the answer was C, because we were P's, battle commenced. No quarter given or mercy shown, you lashed out, and at the end of the day you might have had 15 to 20 fights. There were always a lot of boys who were sorry sights. Schools were nearly depleted the day after while the injured nursed their wounds. No one held a grudge after, unless someone had not played fair. A gang perhaps waylaid someone on their own and thrashed him too hard or had attacked someone too young. Retribution was meted out. The miscreants were sought out one by one, and stripped of their pants or 'breeches' as we called them. Or, he was held down and someone held his nostrils, then when he opened his mouth to breathe, we all spat in it. But it was the one denied of his pants who suffered most, he didn't get them back and had to go all the way home trouserless. The ridicule and humiliation one suffered. We didn't wear underpants in those days.

During all the mayhem and whip fights that ensued on P and C day no adults interfered – it was the local custom, something they had indulged in themselves

during their own school days. I fancy their thoughts took them back to their younger days.

I had to make sure the smaller children from the home got safely on their way, as they could not accompany us bigger boys. Some gangs did without dinner, so they could catch boys taking or returning home from taking their dad's dinner to the factory, but on the whole most parents would take sandwiches to foil them. Some mothers who had children of a retiring nature kept them off school. Indeed some unlucky ones could not return to school after their midday meal on account of their injuries, not really serious, but enough to put them off facing further confrontations. Or course, girls were strictly left alone, but they got some ringside views of the fights that took place, some urging contestants on, others screaming when they saw their brother coming worst off. I remember one girl, not from our school, from St Matthews I think, she was a big one. Her brother was losing his encounter with the enemy, so she waded in and kicked his opponents feet from under him and set on him, jumping up and down on his tummy to the cheers of his mates, but he looked rather abashed. The most scary part was when you split up to go home. Maybe some boys would challenge you, and you just did not know what to say, were they catholic or not, if so you would get a good whipping. Or you were lucky and a very good runner. However like a lot of old customs I don't think it continued after the war. At least it is not held now.

Another local custom was the flooding of Avenham Park during a cold spell. The local fire brigade would fill the Avenham Bowl with water and all and sundry would arrive to skate when it turned to ice. Not many folk owned a pair of skates, but clogs made a very good substitute on which to move over a frozen surface. We don't seem to get the bitter cold artic winters we did eighty years ago. Mill lodges drew children like a magnet particularly in winter, and quite a few fatalities occurred. My local mill lodge was at Fishwick Mill at Birley Bank. It was a whopper. Big and Little lodges, they were known as, though actually it was one big lodge with a walled division, it seemed to be a sort of filter bed. The braver kids used to walk across the wall, which was about a foot and a half wide. I would have been about nine when I first carried out this hazardous and foolish act. The little lodge was very, very deep. Like all or most of the lodges today it has been filled in. Many years ago I took a nostalgic visit to the district, stopped the car, and took a long reflective look at the water which as kids we had stamped on, threw big stones on and inched very slowly onto the ice to see if it held our weight. When the weather started to make it thaw, above all the shrieking and laughter of around 30 to 50 kids, we would hear the ominous noise and a long crack would appear, travelling right across to the other side, resulting in a mad scramble for the bank. Phew!

*By Arthur Eric Crook 1917-1997*

## Blondin, the man on the Guild Plate.



Blondin was born in 1824 in France. His real name was Jean-Françis Gravelet but as he gained international fame he was known as “The Great Blondin”. When he was five years old he was sent to the Ecole de Gymnase Lyon and after six months training as an acrobat made his first appearance as “The Boy Wonder”. Blondin travelled to the U.S.A. in 1855 where he established himself as a major attraction when he crossed the Niagara Falls on a tightrope 1,100 feet long suspended 160 feet above the water. He did this on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1859 and on a number of other occasions. He used differing theatrical variations; blindfolded, in a sack, trundling a wheelbarrow, on stilts, with a man on his back and sitting down midway while he cooked and ate

an omelette and standing on a chair with only one chair leg on the rope. Blondin's performance at the Guild of 1862 the subject on a commemorative plate issued to celebrate the 2012 Preston Guild, a very worthy subject, however this was not the first time Blondin had visited Preston. In June 1861 Blondin performed at The Crystal Palace in London, a venue he returned to on several occasions, and in September that year he visited Preston where he was engaged to entertain an audience at The Corn Exchange. A temporary gallery was erected to accommodate The Band of The 21<sup>st</sup> Artillery Volunteers conducted by Mr C.J. Yates and a rope was extended from a centre window of the Assembly Rooms to an anchor point above the western balcony. Blondin, *a well-built man of somewhat below middling height and bearing on his breast two massive gold medals, mounted the rope amid applause from the company.* He amused the audience by transversing the rope blindfolded, walking backwards, and pushing a wheelbarrow and then with a man on his back. The band played “God Save the Queen” at the close of the performance which had lasted some thirty minutes. The reporter of *The Preston Guardian* commented that “notwithstanding his celebrity and immense crowds which it is known he attracted elsewhere the attendance was very thin” but with entrance prices of one shilling to three shillings this should not have been a surprise to anyone who was at all familiar with the plight of a majority of the citizens of Preston. Following over-production of finished cloth in 1860 and the difficulty obtaining raw cotton from the U.S.A., where the conflicting armies were engaged in a civil war, most of the population of the town were either out of work or at best on short time. Many were on outdoor relief, engaged in stone



breaking or spade work on Fulwood Moor at a shilling a day. In December the Corporation of Preston opened a soup kitchen and they disposed of 585 quarts of soup on the first day at a penny a quart. The illustration shows the soup kitchen at Crooked Lane, Preston. Little wonder that there was that nothing left to spend on entertainment, no

matter how spectacular.

By September 1862 things were slightly improved for some workers but the organisers of the Guild, the Preston Corporation, had provided few amusements for the out-door people. *The (London) Morning Star* commenting on this situation reported that it had been left to a few



private speculators to remedy this. Blondin was engaged by some catering for public entertainment to make a night ascent on the marsh near the Ribble, a shilling being charged for admission. "The intrepid little Frenchman went through his astonishing evolutions on a rope at about seventy feet high and wound up his performance by wheeling a barrow which emitted a variety of fireworks from one end of it to the other. The multitude inside and outside the enclosure could not have consisted of less than 20,000 persons." The report doesn't state the proportions of people who paid to watch, we might draw our own conclusions! In 1873 Blondin was a featured artist at The Raikes Hall Gardens in Blackpool and Whitsuntide excursions were advertised from Preston to Blackpool. Later in that year he performed at the Blackpool Winter Gardens along with King Ohmy of whom more will be written in a future edition. Blondin gave his final performance in 1896 and died in February 1897 in London.

The name "Blondin" became a associated with anything to do with tightrope walking. Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli was described as a "Political Blondin" when metaphorically walked a tight rope and refused to make a political decision and whilst no

further appearances of Blondin have been detected in Preston the spirit and most certainly his name and fame continued for many years. In September 1882 "The African Blondin" was an attraction at The Preston Pleasure Gardens and the labelling of a performer as "Blondin" was not confined to humans. In February 1884, at The New Gaiety Palace of Varieties in Tithbarn Street, (later known as The Prince's), the headline act was a tightrope walking family known as "The Delevanis" but tucked away at the bottom of the bill was "Blondin, the American Monkey" who will stand on her head, walk on her hands, throw somersaults, walk on a

tightrope etc. The ultimate "Blondin" act to visit the town, in some ways more spectacular than the original star, was presented by John Sanger at his "Show of the World" when they set up their tents in St Paul's Road in June 1890; "The Blondin Horse, walking on a tightrope at the height of 30 feet. This splendid and highly trained animal is without doubt, the most wonderful example of horse training in existence, and the most unique performer, there being only one Blondin Horse in the whole world". Follow that!

JOHN SANGER AND SONS'  
LARGEST AND GRANDEST  
**SHOW OF THE WORLD!**  
ST. PAUL'S ROAD, PRESTON,  
Friday, July 4th.

Entirely Re-organised for the season of 1890.  
To keep pace with the times the old-fashioned Circus Shows have been put away, and an entirely New Combination has been arranged. Amongst the numerous novelties never before seen in this country is  
**THE BLONDIN HORSE**  
Walking a Tight-rope at a height of 30ft. This splendid and highly-trained animal is, without doubt, the most wonderful example of horse training in existence, and the most unique performer, there being only one Blondin Horse in the entire world.

*Pete Vickers*



# A tale of the “LUCKLESS MECHANICS OF MORTAR”

Adapted by *Steve Halliwell*

This story made the pages of the  
*London Daily Post* 11<sup>th</sup> October 1837.

On Thursday last, an occurrence happened in Preston which has considerable claims to take its position among the most marvellous of newspaper marvels.

Three bricklayers' labourers were engaged in the erection of a chimney at the new sawmill, near the canal. The column had reached the height of above one hundred and twenty feet, and the artisans performed their operations from scaffolding placed inside the chimney. To this scaffolding they, and the materials used by them, were hoisted in a kind of pail or tub, by means of a pully and block.

Early, however, on the morning of the above day, while hauling up some bricks, etc., the pully rope broke from the top, and the unhappy men of bricks were thus left perched between heaven and earth, without any apparent means of again revisiting this land of toil and troubles.

Not, however, conceiving their pilgrimage "above" to be much preferable to their former probation "below," all kinds of expedients were resorted to for the purpose of again putting them in possession of a rope, whereby they may be tubbed down.

The flying of kites over the chimney, with small pieces of string attached, was tried, but the art of paper aerostation not yet having been disciplined to pilotage the unlucky kites would not o'ertop the cage of the luckless mechanics of mortar.

All kinds of experiments connected with the science of projectiles were also tried in vain; the men were breakfast-less, dinner-less, cheer-less, fire-less, bed-less, house-less, and above all, tubless. In fact, everything but brick less; and this continued until about four o'clock in the afternoon, up to which time all attempts to convey to them the rope had failed.

The poor fellows were nearly hungered to death, more nearly starved to death, and the coming night still more nearly frightened to death. The only chance of saving their lives was the rope; and though by that flaxen talisman many have died, they prayed and longed for it as their only chance of living,

At length - oh woman! Dear creature, we cannot do without you - the "old wife" of one of the exalted sons of Solomon recollected that her dearly beloved had on a pair of new stockings - of real good worsted stockings, her own fingers were the witness.

**"Unravel the stockings,"** calls out the dear old doxy, in a voice of thunder; rich thought, oh "live preserver!"

The sequel is brief; the stockings were unravelled and let down, alternate pieces of string were sent up, until at length the rope, which has so often before vitally connected with the fates of men in high stations, was on this occasion the vital instrument of rescuing the trio of brawny brick-setters from their perilous situation. We hope this great adventure may be duly inserted among the annals of the "blue stocking" society.

# Life in the Harris Orphanage in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

## **1907 to 1922**

I was born on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 1907 at 173 Ellen Street, Preston. The house was on the right hand side going in from Moor Park end. There were terraced houses and I rather recall that the road was cobbled.

On the left hand side of 173 lived a white haired gentleman and his wife. He owned a little trap and horse. I remember this gentleman well: before he set off in his trap he would leave a leather bag full of gold sovereigns with me to play with, and would call for them when he came home.

On the other side of us lived a family called Smith. I can only remember the lady and one of her sons called Nathan. There were wooden banisters up the stairs and the Smiths was broken.

We had a large black leaded fireplace, indeed everyone had one, with a drape across the mantelpiece with bobbles round. The mantelpiece was very high. The grate had to be black leaded every week, flues cleaned, fire irons and fender polished with emery paper and bath brick. The floors were flagged – all old clothes were washed and kept (especially woollen ones) then they were cut into strips for rag rugs, which were pegged in the evenings, with a bit of ingenuity some lovely patterns were made.

Once a week the zinc bath was brought out into the living room in front of the fire, filled with water from the fire grate and all had baths.

In the kitchen was a cold water tap over the 'slop stone' for washing up.

The milkman came round each morning in a trap with milk churns in it, and the horse stopped in the same place each day without telling.

Jugs had to be taken to the milkman who ladled the milk out from the churn. Everyone watched to see the milk was a good colour, if it should be blue – it was being watered and the housewives wouldn't have that.

Lots of carts came round each morning selling food, vegetables – fish and sometimes \*\*at (part of this word is missing due to a punch hole) The ice cream cart would come round in the summer – handcart or horse drawn cart and basins were taken to get ice cream.

The muffin man walked round the streets with a tray of muffins on his head.

Watercress could be had for a penny for a large plate full. Fish came in a horse drawn flat cart.

One of my earliest recollections - I could have only been two at the time, was getting my fingers trapped in the sash windows. The cord broke and my fingers were over the frame.

We had an oil lamp in the living room and later a gas lamp hanging from the ceiling, one had to be careful not to break the mantle, (they were 3d each). In the bedroom was a candle or gas jet – a pipe which came out of the wall.

I had measles around this time and was isolated in the bedroom. My cot was in the middle of the floor and a sheet was dipped in Izal and hung inside the bedroom door. A white haired old Doctor came to see me 'Dr. Anderson' – who had to be paid for each visit.

My cousins and brother David went off to school but not me. I did however go when I was three to Moor Park Wesley. My teacher was Miss Fell. My first lesson at Moor Park was counting cardboard money, which came in little red net bags, we sat on little yellow chairs. Come Whitsuntide we were all taken to Moor Park for games and each child was given an orange and a Bath bun.

**By Miss Andy Anderton (deceased)**

# Patriotic Preston: A Series

Next year marks the centenary of the Great War and what source is best to start off this series than a speech by Harry Cartmell, the Mayor of Preston 1913-1918. This September the work of Mayor Cartmell will be celebrated, I will write more when anything is official, or at least publicised. The extract is from the collection of speeches at the rear of Harry Cartmell's *For Remembrance: An Account of Some Fateful Years*. It was published by Geo. Toulmin and Sons, the publishers for the Preston Guardian, later renamed the Farmers Guardian and is still in print today. It is now out of copyright and I would like to give courtesy to the Cartmell Family for allowing me to use the book.

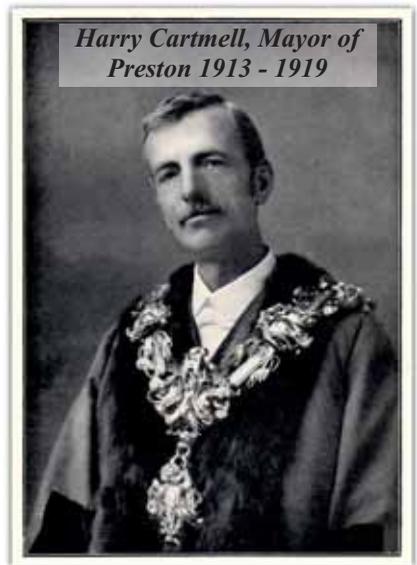
## “War, the Leveller.

[Recruiting Meeting, Moor Park School, 8th December, 1914.]

The meeting to-night is part of a movement for the encouragement of recruiting which is being undertaken by the representatives of the political parties. Laying aside their ordinary antagonisms, they have found common ground in urging everyone to rally to the flag in this moment of national danger.

And so, in order that this platform shall be as representative as possible, it has been arranged that we shall have the advantage of hearing one member of each of the political parties. And first, as speaking for the Government side, we shall hear Sir Arthur Haworth, who will be no stranger to you, at any rate by repute, as he holds high place in the councils of the liberal party. Then our junior member, Mr. Tobin, needs no introduction; but may I say this – I know of no one who at the crisis of our affairs is better able to show in lofty thought and language the fire of patriotism that burns within him. Our senior member (Major Stanley) is not able to come, but we will excuse him. He is in the fighting line, and his deeds will afford better argument for our purposes than any number of appeals on a Recruiting platform.

And then the attitude of labour on this great question is to be expounded by Mr. Shaw, who is the local candidate for the party. I should like to add that nothing has given me more comfort and encouragement than the unanimity with which his party has rallied to the standard in this emergency. And if the gentleman named do not represent all modes of thought perhaps I, who now speak to you, may be allowed to voice the convictions of those who do not pronounce any party shibboleth. I do not think any of the speakers will try to deceive us by describing war at its best as anything but a horrible thing. It is a horrible business, but it has its compensations – and not the least of them is one that will no doubt be adequately expressed to-night – it leads us to forget the things that divide us and knits us



together in a bond of brotherhood and good fellowship. And never, I suppose, in the history of this country have we so nearly approached as we have to-day that patriotism which animated the noble Romans of old when 'none were for the party and all were for the state.'

And war, too, is a great leveller. The trumpet call to service is heard as clearly in the palace as in the cottage. It is as eagerly responded to in the one as in the other. And nothing will bring home to His Majesty's subjects the duty, or might I not say the privilege, of the moment, so clearly as his action in sending his own sons to share the common danger.

The call to arms has been answered as readily now, as always, by the aristocracy of this country. The roll of honour shows how nobly they have played their part. And as for the seats of learning, we are told that nothing more dismal can be imagined than the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge at this moment. Fifty per cent. (in some Colleges as many as seventy-five per cent.) of the young men have laid aside books and studies, and are now learning the sterner lessons of war.

And the professional classes have answered in the same spirit. If I might venture to speak of things near to hand, if you were to make enquiry in the offices of members of my own profession in this town, I think you would find that they, or might I say we, have done our share – we have sent our sons.

But why particularize when all have done so well. The response to the call of King and Country has been magnificent. Yet we need more men, and that is to be the burden of the addresses you are to listen to to-night. We want peace. We do not want our soldiers to grow old in the trenches. We want peace quickly. But we want, we *must* have, an abiding peace. And by every draft of men we send now we are hastening the time for the celebration of the final victory, for the dawn of that new and better era to which we are all so anxiously looking forward.” Pages 228-229.

Just a quick note for context. December 1914 was a period, certainly for Preston's recruitment, of decline. Historians have attempted to find out why and the change in height and chest regulations might have been a reason. The simple fact that the Mayor also decided to introduce the speakers might have been a strategy to encourage attendees to hear the arguments for enlistment. Moor Park School is still educating children today and is opposite Deepdale Football Stadium and is on Moor Park Avenue, which runs parallel to Moor Park. Cartmell was a powerful speaker and advocate for education, so it is not wonder he chose such a venue for his talk; although it may have been for convenience as some meetings were held in the evening and there is the fact that Cyril Cartmell, his son who organised the Preston Pals, was listed as residing on Moor Park Avenue. Harry Cartmell was also on the Board of Guardians for Preston Grammar School.

A further extract will appear in next month's edition, but it is likely it will appear online first: <http://preston1914.wordpress.com/>

David Huggonson. BA. MA.

# The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway around Preston The Bamber Bridge Preston Extension

North of the Ribble crossing, the line was carried on a landscaped embankment traversing an area formally known as Wyse's Gardens, which ended at the last over-bridge before Preston. The Town Clerk required this structure to be so designed as to harmonise with the graceful surroundings, and the finished work must have gone beyond his greatest expectations.

'Ivy Bridge', as it later became known to Prestonians, owing to a profusion of this araliaceous evergreen obscuring much of the masonry on the west side, was constructed of coursed ashlar stone with rusticated joints and rock faces voussoirs.



Because of the limited height it has an elliptical arch and crosses the Broad Walk between Avenham and Miller Parks on a 30 ft. skew over to the south-west, 12 ft. from the square. The parapets comprise bulbous cast iron balusters with stone copings, and alternate stone panels; there being four sets of four balusters on each parapet, with a half baluster at the end of each stone panel and parapet end.

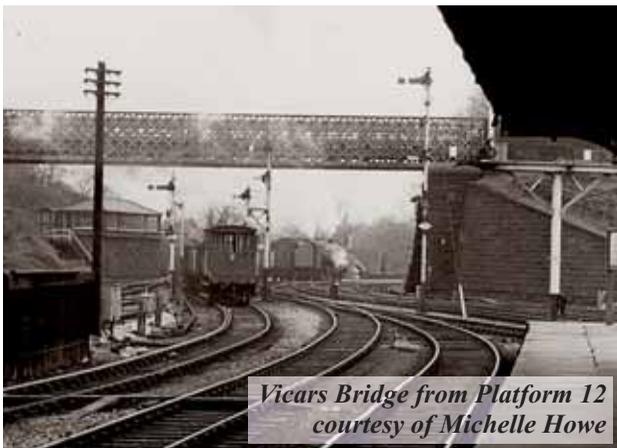
A set of decorative wrought iron gates, located midway beneath the arch, completed what can only be described as a work of art. In 1874 the bridge was widened on the east side, to allow for a third track in the form of a long shunting siding, which terminated a short distance from the Ribble viaduct. The line entered the yard at Preston by way of a short cutting above which a bridge was built to connect East Cliff with the town.

**Vicars Bridge**, as it became known, was named after the vicarage nearby, which was the residence of the Rev. J.O. Parr, vicar of Saint George's Church, off Lune Street. Other properties on the Cliff at that time were occupied by the Rev. J. Clay, Mr E. Harrison and Alderman German, respectively.

The bridge is a single span lattice girder type and was constructed by Mr Daglish's company from components fabricated at his workshop in St. Helens, in

accordance with Mr Fairbourn's patent.

The finished work measured 140 ft. in length by 28 ft. 6 ins. in width, with a height of 25 ft. from the track bed to the underside of the girders. The box parapets are 9 ft. 6 ins. high by 18 ins. wide and are made up of inner and outer lattice work, comprising 3 and a half ins. x quarter ins.



wrought-iron flat strip, riveted at the intersections, with horizontal and vertical bracing and riveted iron plates top and bottom. The underside has 15 transverse H-section riveted iron girders, upon which timber planking was laid lengthwise. This form of decking became unsuitable for heavier traffic, and was replaced in 1971 by a single-track bailey type structure with cantilever footbridge. The work was carried out by the Royal Engineers and was intended to be a temporary facility only, but when the R.E. got involved, the completed work is invariably of such good quality as to last for many years which, indeed, has been the case with this particular bridge. The Bailey is secured by tensioned anchors on each abutment, and although it is located within the framework of the old structure, it is entirely independent of it. Such is the condition of Vicars Bridge at the time of writing, that it will soon be unable to carry its own weight and will have to be removed. The bailey will remain in situ until plans are drawn up for a new bridge.

The south-east approach wall for the road comprises ashlar stone and measures 28 ft. 9 and a half ins. in length by 6 ft. from the road surface to the top of the coping stones and has a width of 27 ins. There is a large capping stone at the east end, 7 ft. 2 ins. by 19 ins.; the smaller coping stones have a height of 8 ins. The north-west wall is 46 ft. 9 ins. long and the south-west wall has a length of 29 ft., curving round from east to south. Both walls have the same characteristics as the south-east one, and the north-east was removed some time ago to accommodate a stairway to the car park below. It had been the original intention of the company to erect a three-arched brick bridge on the site, but such a structure would have seriously restricted the number of tracks entering the station and yard area.

**Taken from 'The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway around Preston' by Bob Gregson**

**ISBN 9780956518453**

Continued next month

# ONCE UPON A TIME

Once upon a time I can remember a time  
It was a darling, darling time.  
My own Life lay within that time - it was mine.

A time when Life's seconds ran slow  
from decade to decade, cradle to grave.  
With a garner house stored from the ongoing flow  
of a richness we had not thought to save.  
A richness engendered in early days  
of bedside cots by a bird tapping pane.  
Of nocturnal flights down a stair which wound it's way  
to a kindlewood grate which our mother had lain.

A time of field orchids and bluebell woods  
with baskets of blackberries on birthdays.  
Of October evenings with children in Autumn party mood  
and a grandfather giving half-crowns on holidays.  
And then there were evenings before a bright fire  
with warm clear water in a tin bath  
and a child's fixed gaze watching fire flames dart higher  
as, dark beyond the cottage, briars rambled along the narrow path.

A time of wall clocks which ticked and chimed in the night  
in rooms lilac scented when the May month came.  
And a dark privet hedge which, in it's sturdy height  
sheltered our sleeping presence beyond the cottage pane.  
Our clothes were sewn on a hand machine  
with special dresses for special days.  
And a hand stitched doll her smile serene  
rosy lips, hat, coat, shoes - all Riding Hood gay.

Then, as hard times dawned - harsh and without laughter  
with London's streets daily bombed to the ground  
three Northern children grew within a provincial backwater.  
And, within a Lancashire orchard bird song was the only sound.  
And when no longer a man was at home  
and our mother alone daily worked to the bone  
War's local sound meant nothing more than Samlesbury's drone.  
Love remained and great as a Sea in it's unfettered flow.

There then came a time of Sunday teas  
of Victoria sponge on Crown Derby plates.  
Tea cups comfortably held on the knee  
and a mother's delighted gaze as we ate.  
Mother, sister, sister, brother, our nuclear family.  
Such childhood memories now move vibrantly.

Once upon a time - I still remember that time.  
A time when present, past, and womb intertwined.  
It was our darling mother's time.



Penwortham

**Priory**  
ACADEMY



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



# Priory's 60th Anniversary Celebration

**Calling all ex-pupils of Priory**

On Friday 12<sup>th</sup> 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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