

# The Preston Magazine



Issue 21



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Maudlands  
Rat and Sparrows**

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# Welcome

Welcome to the 21st issue of The Preston Magazine, our free monthly magazine containing snippets of lesser-known history articles relating to Preston.

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

Included this month are – A Poem from Preston born Canadian poet Robert Service, from his book of poems entitled Rhymes of a Red Cross Man, which was dedicated to his brother, Albert, who was killed in action, in France in August 1916, Memories of Preston Shed by Robin Bamber, Memories of Preston Catholic College by Keith Coles. Part 4 of the diary of James Green 305712, who served in the Great War, our thanks go to Mrs Rita Finley for her permission to print her Uncle Jimmy's diary. As always our ongoing serial 'A Preston Lad' by Arthur Eric Crook (1917-1997).

**If anyone has any family memories, photographs or any items of trench art relating to the First World War that could feature in our magazine please do get in touch.** Also if any of your family members are named on a Preston or South Ribble War Memorial and you have any information about them we would love to hear from you.

**Steve Halliwell's first book on Preston Pubs is now out available at Waterstone's and Amazon, a perfect Christmas present. Preston Historical Society's next meeting is on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December 'The Making of Preston's Parks' by Colin Stanfield at Preston Minster, Church St, starting at 7 15pm.**

Should you require a copy by post each month, please contact us. We can also email you a pdf version of the magazine. If I have missed you lately please do let me know.

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

Take a look at the Preston groups on Flickr, there are thousands of images, old and new.

**Preston Digital Archive** – is always on the look out for old photos of Preston and surrounding area, please get in touch at the number below if you would like to contribute. We can scan any images for you and give you a digital copy.

A copy of each issue of all the magazines will be kept at Lancashire Records Office.

**Front Cover Image – Harris Institute by Tony Worrall**

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## Photos from Preston Past

### **Postal strike ends with talks pledge**

TOP-LEVEL talks are due this week to decide the fate of 2,000 men and postal workers at the centre of a crippling three-day mail strike.

One hundred and sixty postal staff in Preston today started work clearing the backlog of mail after voting unanimously on a return to work.

The men walked out last week after Post Office football team captain was sacked because of his poor attendance record, but have now agreed on an independent inquiry into the case by a senior representative of management and union.

The breakthrough came after national officers for both sides hammered out a formula which was put to a mass meeting and accepted.

A Post Office spokesman said: "Exceptionally, there will be a further review of this case this week, prior to the last date of service of the employee in question."

The northern controller of Personnel will meet senior union officials in an effort to resolve the situation."

Work has already resumed at the Fleet Street sorting office in Preston and the Post Office spokesman said that he hoped that the backlog would be soon dealt with.

The man at the centre of the dispute is the captain of the Post Office snooker team. Four of the absences which led to his dismissal were said to have been the results of injuries sustained during team matches.

JAN 26 1987



Postmen Dave Davies, Mick Dunderdale and Brian Hardman battle with the backlog.

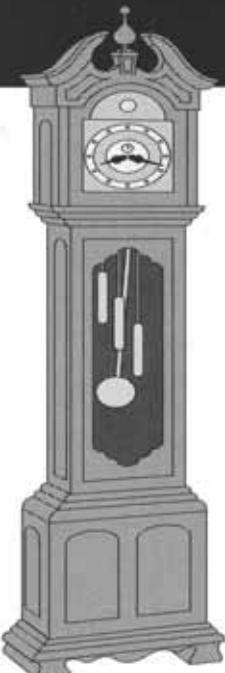
*From The Lancashire Evening Post. Courtesy of Tony Billington*

### **PRIVATE J. DICKINSON.**

Official intimation has been received by his wife, who resides at 42, Fishwick-parade, Preston, of the death in action of Private John Dickinson, Lancashire Fusiliers. Deceased went to France in January last, and was killed on August 24th. He enlisted about 15 months ago, and previous to the war was employed as a spinner at Messrs. Horrockses, Crewdson, and Co's Newhall-lane Mill. Private Dickinson was 36 years of age, and leaves a wife and three children, the youngest of whom he has not seen. He has three brothers, a brother-in-law, and two nephews serving with the forces.



*From The Preston Guardian 4<sup>th</sup> November 1916. Courtesy of Preston Digital Archive*



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# The Fish-stones, Preston Market Square



Market Place, North Side, 1850, by John Ferguson Courtesy of the Harris Museum and Art Gallery

I recently came across two images of the fish-stones on Preston Market Square, these are small parts of larger pictures. The above image also shows the old water pump. I wonder what happened to them when they were removed !

'The fish-stones are situated on the north side of the Market place, attiguous to New Street end, and are of circular form, of stone, supported by square stone maintainers, and are divided into three compartments, consisting of four entrances into them in all, but at present very deficient in beauty and comfort, for want of a covering to preserve the fish mongers, and others, from the inclemency of the weather, and particularly in the winter season. The fish stones are regularly supplied with fish; such as salmon, plaise, mort, sprods, smelt, eels, oysters, cockles, muscles, lobsters, shrimps and other fish. Wild ducks, and other birds are bought from Lytham, Blackpool, Bispham, Meols, Heysham, and Pilling to this market and sometimes from Carlisle and Ireland.'

'Pumps - One in the Market Place, near the fish stones, and sometimes used as a whipping post for offenders guilty of misdemeanours within the borough; handcuffs are fixed to the body of the pump.' Both quotes taken from A Topographical, Statistical, & Historical Account of the Borough of Preston written by Marmaduke Tulket 1821

The Market Place, 1851, by John Ferguson Courtesy of the Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston



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## More Memories of Preston Catholic College

One article in the September issue of your Preston Magazine struck a chord with me as I started at PCC in 1961, one year later than Tony Billington although I don't think our paths ever knowingly crossed.

I passed my 11 plus at St Mary Magdalen's in Penwortham along with three other lads and two girls, the girls went to Winckley Square Convent, we boys went next door to Preston Catholic College, both schools now closed after long histories.

As with Tony that first day was daunting to say the least, all us newbies were sat on the floor in the gym whilst formalities were finalised and warnings given, I was put into Campion House not asked just told, being told was to become a large part of the next five years. I was also placed in Form 1G which was the lowest stream, whoever decided that had some foresight because I was never to leave that stream in the whole five years of my secondary education. There definitely was a favouritism amongst the teachers for some of the posher lads and I very soon picked out the teachers that I wanted to avoid, mainly the dreaded Jesuits, or God's Stormtroopers as they are nicknamed. I don't remember ever having weekly report cards, only end of term ones, I do remember what Tony failed to mention – the ferula, this was a whalebone stitched between two strips of leather and was administered to errant boys' hands by Father Whittall who could have been an understudy for the honey monster. The routine was that anyone who misbehaved by failing to do their homework, fighting or being cheeky amongst a myriad of misdemeanours, would be sentenced by the teacher to a number of "cracks", three being the least, twelve the most as I remember. The teacher would then complete a form that he would post at Father Whittall's office, only after then could you attend for your punishment. Believe me that was a horrendous wait and sometimes it could be the next day before you could report to the office after a rather traumatic evening and night, the wait was actually worse than the punishment and that was how the evil ones liked it. During my first year, I was struggling with my Latin homework one night and I spent all evening until really late with no success, I knew that the next day Father Middlehurst would have no compunction but to send me to see Father Whittall, the next morning I was in excruciating pain (no honestly I was) and Mum let me stay off school, that evening I was whisked off to the doctor who admitted me to hospital immediately with acute appendicitis – result, and the next six weeks off school while I convalesced. Year two did not include Latin – another result.

We were not a well off family by a long way and before starting at the Cath Coll my Mum took me to the most expensive outfitter's in Preston called Lingards at the top of Mount Street, that was the only place that you could obtain Grammar School uniforms and they could charge what they liked, and they did, I think it took my Mum a long time to pay off that loan. During my third or fourth year we were being taught Religion by Father Spencer, recently to become posthumously infamous in a court case brought by a former pupil, at one point in the lesson he pointed at me and told me to stand in front of the class, this I duly did and he then ranted about how anyone could walk about looking so scruffy and unkempt with no pride in their appearance, this went on for a good five minutes, he then let me sit down which I did silently, I never told my parents about the incident they would have been mortified. That event along with others opened my eyes to the unchristianity of these christians (lower case intended) and I vowed to turn my back on the lot of them when I left, I did. I seem to be the antithesis of Tony as I loved metalwork, put up with technical drawing because it was linked to metalwork, loathed sports so I went on the cross-country as I could run away from the organised games although there was always a teacher lurking en route somewhere to catch out the shirkers and smokers. The careers master was not hard put to recommend an engineering future for me, I was happy with that as it meant I did not have to stay on for sixth form and I could leave at sixteen after O'levels and start my apprenticeship. Short-sighted, maybe but I think I've done alright.

By Keith Coles .

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## **PRESTON THEN AND NOW 1834 – 1893 (CONT.)**

It was erected in 1854, as the permanent home of the postal business, which, however, became too large to be conveniently transacted even there. One of the several houses below the Parish Church (since converted into shops) had for long years before this been a sufficient Post Office for Preston, and was conducted by women, the last of whom, Miss Wilson, died about forty years ago, and Mr Drennan, from Liverpool, was appointed post master, which office he held until recently, when he was superannuated. There was a Post Office, on a very small scale, even before that in Church-street, at the house now occupied by Mrs Winn, butcher, in Lancaster-road; and the slip in the wall for reception of letters may still be seen near to the door. The premises adjoining the Post Office in Lancaster-road were some time tenanted by the Conservative Club, formed principally through the zeal and exertions of Mr WP Park, JP, who found willing coadjutors in the gentlemen now prominent in the party; and the club remained there until the formation of Guildhall-street, for which some low-roofed shops fronting Fishergate had to make way. Then was erected the present-day club-house of Old English aspect – a style, as stated to the writer at the time 'typical of Conservatism'. The foundation stone was laid by the late Mr Hermon MP in 1877. The building was completed in 1878 by the Right Hon. R A (now Lord) Cross, who was MP for Preston from 1859 to 1862. While noticing the new features of this locality we must draw attention to the great improvement in the Congregational place of worship formerly spoken of as Cannon-street Chapel. It now, from an addition to each end occupies the whole space between Cannon-street and Guildhall-street, wherein is the principle entrance, a fine Grecian portico. To return to Fishergate : In 1872, Mr JB Booth laid the foundation stone of the palatial Gas Offices contiguous to the Post Office, and the company removed to them in 1877 from premises in Glover-street. The new offices built from the design of Messrs. Garlick, Park and Sykes, occupy the site of two ordinary shops, with small old-fashioned windows, that at the corner of the passage being tenanted by the late Mr Bailey, stationer and printer, who about 1856-7 started a weekly newspaper, which he named the 'Preston Standard'. It had but a brief existence. Mr Gillet, joiner and cabinet maker, was, we believe, the last tenant of that shop before it fell into the possession of the Gas Company. Adjoining Shelley Arms Hotel stood a little low-roofed thatched cottage of most primitive appearance, and perhaps about two hundred years old, or more. A tall man might almost have looked in at the bedroom windows. It was the freehold property of, and tenanted by, two old maiden ladies named Barton, who over and over again had been offered for it fabulous sums of money, which were always firmly refused, their invariable answer to the offers being to the effect that they had lived in it all their lives and would die in it; and they kept their word. When the last of them joined her departed sister, about 1870, the ancient tenement, was bought by the late Mr HP Watson, auctioneer and sheriff's officer, who erected upon the site the present building as auction and salerooms. After his death it was for a time occupied by the Preston Reform Club until the handsome premises in Chapel-street were erected on the site of the old County Office, a large house once occupied as the vicarage; and Mr H Bannister, draper, became the next tenant of the whilom club-house. Our next noteworthy object is the substantial stone building in the Italian style, with ornamental front, nearly opposite Cannon-street, erected from the design of Councillor JJ Myres, for the late Mr G Toulmin, as the publishing office and printing works of the Preston Guardian. It stands on the site of one of the oldest public houses in Preston, the Old Legs of Man, and is one of the most striking features of Fishergate. It was first occupied at the beginning of 1873, the publishing office being removed from the shop now occupied by Mrs Cartwright, optician, and the printing-works, from premises in Cannon-street, now the Chronicle printing office.

## The War Effort

### **Rats and Sparrows**

The Rural District of Preston call attention to the depredations committed upon crops by these pests and with a view to the conservation of the national food supply offer the following Awards for their Destruction within the area of the Council

1/- per dozen Rat Tails

1/- per dozen Mole Heads

3d per dozen Heads of fully fledged House Sparrows

2d per dozen Heads of unfledged House Sparrows

1d per dozen House Sparrow Eggs

The Awards will be paid by any member of the Rural District Council

M. LUTENER. Clerk to the Council

Council Offices, Walker Street,

Preston, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 1918

**Lancashire Daily Post, March, 1918**

At the Preston Rural District Council, this afternoon a letter was read from the local government board directing the collection of the stones from **fruits and hard nut shells** which are required for an urgent war purpose, and the clerk was directed to write to the schoolmasters in the district asking them to bring the collection to the notice of the schoolchildren.

**Lancashire Daily Post 16<sup>th</sup> July 1918**

**Editors note : Rats and Sparrows** - During the first World War the government became very concerned with the preservation of food supplies and by the prevention of waste. In order to try and prevent waste 'pests' needed to be culled. Money was offered by the government for killing these vermin. Rat and Sparrow Clubs were also set up. Local policemen and council employees were expected to pay anyone who brought the rats, sparrows, etc., to them, which must have caused considerable hardship for them until they were reimbursed by the Board of Agriculture. In Preston these measures carried on until 1920, when notices warning of the ceasing of payments for them were placed in the local paper.

**Fruit Stones and Hard Nut Shells** were the raw material used in the manufacture of charcoal for use in the filters of gas masks. The stones and shells produced a better quality charcoal than wood. Several hundred tons of charcoal were made towards the end of the first World War. The material was collected by the National Salvage Council.

**Preston Allotments** - £6,000 Worth of Vegetables Grown Last Year. It was stated by Councillor Parkinson (chairman of the Preston Allotments Committee) at the meeting of the Preston Town Council this morning, that last year there were 700 allotment holders in Preston, and that they produced £6,000 worth of vegetables. All this was accomplished practically by men who were engaged in workshops during the day. This year there were three times the number. He drew attention to the proposed exhibition of vegetables in the Public Hall. Prizes in the form of war certificates would be given, and the proceeds of the show – the receipts from tickets of admission and the sale of produce would be devoted to the Prisoners of War fund.

**Lancashire Daily Post 29<sup>th</sup> May 1918**

# Diary of James Green    305712

8<sup>th</sup> King's Liverpool Regt.

B.E.F. France

1914-1918

July 21<sup>st</sup>. Left 'St Omer' arrived at B Camp.

'Brandoeck' Belgium, went up in the 'Durham' trenches. Fritz shelled us a lot during the night. A quiet place.

July 25<sup>th</sup>. Went up in the trenches at 'Ypres' on working parties. 'Strand' and 'Oxford' trenches. It was the head of a mine shaft that the engineers and sappers were driving underground to come up under the German trenches so that, when we went on the offensive, they would be blown up before we advanced. We had to take sandbags, pit props etc. Our job was to go down and keep filling the sandbags and hoisting them to the top and emptying them behind the trench. We got to the mine shaft in the trench, there were about twelve of us, also a stretcher party in case of casualties. We were just about to get in the mine shaft when Jerry sent a mini wafer over. It's a shell that weighs about 1cwt. It only has a range of about 600yds. It is fired up in the air and in the daytime you can see them coming over. It was pitch black but we heard it so we made a dash for the entrance to the mine but, the stretcher bearers were there before us. In their hurry they got the stretchers jammed across the entrance so nobody could get in. We had to drop flat where we were in the bottom of the trench. The thing came down just to the right of us. There was a great shattering explosion, it sounded like a 5 storey mill falling down, the noise was awful, it blew part of the trench in and buried us. We finished what we had to do and we were making our way back through the village, just then Jerry sent over some gas shells. We had to put our gas masks on and what with the gas shells and darkness and shell holes all over the road!! The village was also the centre of a canal system there were bridges running through it which you had to cross. He sent shells over at intervals, we made our way through the village still with our gas masks on, we were very lucky we only had one casualty for the nights adventure. Next day we had to have our gas masks inspected and checked how long we had worn them. Yes, they were safe.

July 27<sup>th</sup> Friday. We have now been holding the line two days at 'Ypres'.

July 29<sup>th</sup> Sunday. Came out of the 'Ypres' trenches for a few days. We are getting ready to go up for a big advance.

August. Went back in the trenches next night at 10 o clock after hours of shelling in the open. Nothing to eat, weary from having a long march and facing heavy shell fire all night. Zero hour arrived, 2000 guns of all sizes opened fire. It continued for about 10 minutes and then lifted another 100yd. The noise was shattering, when it lifted we rushed over the 'top' me and John Green carrying the Lewis Gun and the ammunition carrier following. We did not meet much opposition at the first trench but, at the next line we ran into a German machine gun post which held us up. The Germans put up a stiff fight until they were surrounded and a Mills Bomb tossed inside, all the occupants were either killed or wounded. They were a brave lot, they fought to the end. While we were in a shell hole, held up by machine-gun fire, I saw one of our fellows hit through the spine, he was in the same shell hole as we were. It was awful to see his death agony. If I had been



married then I could not have faced it. He was calling for his wife and children, it was putting the wind up amongst us, and all the time he was clawing the ground. I often wish now that we had had the courage to put him out of his agony sooner. When we got to our objective we were at 'Pomern Redoubt'. We were 2 mile in advance. We dug a strong point in front of our new line and held it with bombs and Lewis Guns. We had a lot of casualties. While we were going up one of the trenches, on the advance, I met my uncle Jack he was coming down with a party of the 'North Lancs'. I did have a few words with him but the trench was full of troops and wounded passing to the rear and we were having to advance, so I had to say goodbye and wish him the best of luck. I came through without a scratch, we held the line 4 days and we were relieved by the 'Irish Division'. We came out on rest and expected to go down to 'Calais'.

August 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday. Inspection and speech by the General.

August 6<sup>th</sup> Monday. Left Mill Camp and proceeded by train, then went by motor transport to 'Louches'. It was a quiet place. Got 3 letters.

August 8<sup>th</sup>. Got 40 francs pay, doing well. Lost it all gambling.

August 18<sup>th</sup>. Got a parcel of cigs from home.

August 19<sup>th</sup>. Got some papers from home.

August 20<sup>th</sup> Monday. Got a letter from Lilian. Played 16 Platoon at football. We won 4-1 easy.

August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Drew 10 francs pay at 'Louches'.

August 25<sup>th</sup>. Played for D Company against B Company. Got beat. Hard lines.

August 30th Thursday. Went down to 'Calais' on a days outing. While we were out on rest we played B Company at football. I played full back, during the game we were winning 2-1, during the last few minutes left Thorpe, (used to play with Bolton Wanderers) came rushing through and, on the spur of the moment, I blocked his shot at the same time he kicked for goal. I limped for many days after in fact I went sick, I just got a bandage put on. In fact I went 'over the top' with my foot bandaged and never looked at it until a week later when we came out of the line.

September, Monday. Sir Douglas Haig came down with his escort, pennants flying and usual show, to inspect our division, the '55<sup>th</sup> West Lancs Div. 19<sup>th</sup> Army Corp. 5<sup>th</sup> Army. We were getting ready for another big offensive.

September 16<sup>th</sup>. Leaving tonight to go up again to the trenches. Eve of the 16<sup>th</sup> before 'Passchendale' we went in the trenches in fighting order. Jerry was shelling all the roads to the front lines. We got to the front lines, in fact, they were only shell holes. It was get under cover anywhere until zero hour. There had been a big issue of rum given out, a lot of jars of it were carried up in the trenches to drink before we went 'over the top' to give us courage. I did not have any as I wanted to keep a cool head. It was getting near zero hour the shelling got heavier and everything was being blow sky high. Scores of our fellows were killed before dawn, they had drunk too much rum and were climbing out of the trench and running out into 'no man's land' towards the Germans. They were mown down by machine gun fire, they didn't have a chance. I knew lots of them from Southport and Blackpool, I knew some of their families, you could not tell them how they died. It was tragic.

'No mans land'- which we had to cross at zero hour was one mass of ditches, mud, shell holes and water and buried in the mud were the backs of soldiers who had been killed in the last advance. They were just left where they had fallen and had sunk in the mud. You could see the shoulder straps of their equipment in the mud. When we went over at zero hour we had to walk over them to get to our objective.

Continued next issue .....

## Discovery of skeletons and an ancient tombstone at Maudlands

The workmen employed about St Walburge's church have frequently met with fragments of human bones, and occasionally almost perfect skeletons, in the excavations which have taken place in connection with the works for the new building. These discoveries have not excited much surprise as the site is known to have been the burial ground of the ancient hospital of St Mary Magdalen, which flourished there in days of yore. In the cutting through the estate for the Lancaster railway, similar remains were found. Within the present week however there has been a discovery of a somewhat more interesting character. On Tuesday morning last, as one of the workmen of Messrs Cooper and Tullis, the contractors for the building, was employed in digging, about thirty feet from the north-east corner of the church, in order to obtain some sand which is found in great abundance under a bed of clay, about two or three feet in thickness, he came to a hard substance, some fifteen inches from the surface, and care being taken in removing the soil, an ancient tombstone, in a good state of preservation, was discovered. It was cracked across the centre, but in other respects was perfect. It bore no inscription, but had sculptured upon it a rude cross, with four arms, the length of the cross was about three feet. The stone itself was five feet six inches in length, varying in width from seventeen inches at the top, and gradually tapering to fifteen inches at the bottom. It was of old red sandstone, such as is found in the bed of the river, and the same as was in old times obtained from the 'stone delph' below Avenham to build, so tradition says, the tower of the old parish church, that is, the one preceding the structure now being renovated. The stone was very friable, and we regret to say that it was further broken in the attempt to remove it. The character of the cross, a geometrical one, would assign the date of interment to the latter end of the thirteenth century, and it is not improbable, from the fact of its being the only tombstone found over the remains that have been discovered, that it denotes the burial place of a superior of the hospital, which then flourished on that beautiful site. In digging about a yard further off, and when about thirty inches from the surface, a skull was met with, in consequence of which it was determined to excavate beneath the tombstone, and also to see if there were any further remains attached to the skull thus bared. Accordingly, in the afternoon, Mr Hansom, the architect of the church, the Rev T Weston, the Rev T W Clifford, and other gentlemen attended, and in their presence, as well as the presence of a considerable crowd who had been attracted to the spot by the rumour of human bones being discovered, a further large quantity of earth was removed. The excavations being proceeded with, it was found that the skull was the part of an almost perfect skeleton of a full sized person. The soil over which the stone we described rested, was then excavated, and at less than three feet from the surface another skull was met with. It appeared rather larger than the first one on which phrenologists would have passed a favourable verdict, the organs of veneration and benevolence, as well as the moral faculties being finely developed, and the perceptive powers being also strongly marked. A small portion of the tombstone, broken off in the removal, falling upon the skull, broke it into several pieces, the remains being very brittle. The excavations being continued, it was found that this skull also was a portion of a perfect skeleton. There was also in the soil some slight traces of decayed vegetable matter, as of the remains of the coffins. The bones were carefully removed, and deposited beneath the high altar at St Walburge's, where the other remains met with in the course of the week have been placed. The circumstance of the cross being sculptured upon the tomb stone has led many persons to assume that it denoted the burial place of some ecclesiastic. Such however is not the case. It has ever been the custom in a Roman Catholic church to bury priests with their head towards the east, or the high altar of the



*St Walburgh's Church & Tabernacle, Preston.*

church, and the laity with their feet towards the east. The inferior members of the clergy and members of religious communities, if not priests, are interred in the same way as the laity. As both skeletons found had their head to the west they were evidently not the remains of priests. The more reasonable supposition is that the stone denoted the last resting place of a warden or other superior officer of the hospital, who was not necessarily an ecclesiastic. The spot where these remains were found is of much interest, as connected with the ancient history of 'Priest's Town' being the site, as we have stated of one of the monastic institutions, which in the 'good old times' flourished here. There are only two in Preston, one of them was the Franciscan convent of Grey Friars, in the Friarage, of which the last remains were swept away within the last fifteen years to make way for the new foundry of Mr Stevenson. The once sacred walls of the convent had been used for the purposes of a house of correction, and had afterwards been patched up into cottages; and the lancet windows of the ancient chapel were used to illumine the wretched dwellings of some of the most degraded of our population. The names yet borne by two of our streets, Ladywell-street, near the canal, and Friargate, are the only traces we have left of the once important convent of the Grey Friars. The other monastic establishment was the hospital dedicated to Mary Magdalen. There have been no traces of any of its buildings ever known within modern memory; and although it was swept away long before the convent, it has, like its sister institution, left its traces in the names of places in its neighbourhood, the land on which it stood being yet known as 'Maudlands' (the land of Magdalen), and the neighbourhood being always called 'Spittals (hospital) Moss'. Of the Magdalen hospital there is, however, a tradition that the church which once occupied the site had sunk beneath the earth, and among the old inhabitants of Preston, there are many who have gone to the Maudlands on Christmas Eve, to listen to the sweet peal of the bells of the buried church which is was averred regularly, at that season, rung in the great Christian festival, as they were wont to do when above ground. The field beneath which the sunken church was believed to rest in its entirety was always called 'Churchfield'. We need not be surprised that a spot hallowed by the associations of an ancient church and a monastic institution that had flourished in the days of uniformity of faith, should have been selected by the Roman Catholics of our town as the site for their new church. But it is not alone as a church dedicated to the pious purpose of hospital and a church that Maudlands has claimed the attention of the antiquary. Its fine commanding position above the river, and the peculiar shape of a mound, which, until lately, formed a conspicuous object upon it, has led many antiquarians to conclude that it had been the site of a Roman Camp, or a minor station, and that is, as well as the mound of the Castle-hill at Penwortham, on the opposite side of the river, were on one of the great roman roads, the iter, from Blackrod to Lancaster, which intersected the one from the Naze to Ribchester. The roman occupancy of the site is not, however, so well established as the existence of a monastic institution, for on the mound being explored, about 8 to 10 years ago, under the directions of our local savans, the result satisfied the party that the mound was more modern, and they were generally of the opinion that it had been raised for the purpose defence in some civil war. A small brick building of the dimensions of four feet two inches by about one foot ten inches was found which appeared to have answered the purpose of a gunpowder store. When the brick building was discovered and a portion bared, we remember that immense crowds were attracted to the spot by the rumour that the excavators had met with the steeple of the sunken church ! No article whatever was found indicating any great antiquity. The site of the Magdalen hospital in Preston, is very similar to that of other establishments in various parts of the country, being on the outside of town, which, as, they were the resorts of lepers and diseased persons, was chosen with wisdom on sanitary grounds. Not only, however, are there no traces of the church, or other building of the ancient hospital on the site, but there are very meagre records of the institution itself. We learn, however, that the name occurs in a lease, of the 20<sup>th</sup> of Elizabeth, of the tithes of corn and grain arising on certain demesne lands called the 'Magdeleynes and Magdeleyn ridding within the liberties of the town of Preston' and of one close containing two acres 'near to the capitall messuage called the Magdeleynes, in the said countie'.

## **SPORTS AND SOCIAL CLUBS**

Long, long ago in a working environment far, far removed from the one that exists today, King Cotton was in terminal decline. In the catchment area covered by the Preston, Penwortham and Lostock Hall magazines, four local employers of labour began to take its place. I and my contemporaries upon finishing their education were encouraged by their parents, who had lived through the depression years of the twenties and thirties, to seek out apprenticeships and office positions in these companies because they offered not only a job for life, but a career. Who were they ?

**Leyland Motors** was already world famous for the production of Churchill and Centurion Tanks. In addition they also built the Leyland Tiger and Atlantean busses alongside engines for heavy goods vehicles. In the same manufacturing mode was **English Electric** better known locally as Dick Kerr's. The Traction division, on the west side of Strand Road began producing the diesel locomotives that would soon sound the death knell for British Railways Steam Engines. On the east side the aircraft division, who during the recent war had built the Halifax Bomber, now began to build the record breaking Canberra Bomber. English Electric also had sites at Warton on the old United States Army Air Force Base and at Samlesbury Aerodrome where during the war No. 9 Group RAF flew Hawker Hurricanes and Airspeed Oxfords from the site. **Ribble Motors** was the largest bus operator in the North West stretching from Carlisle in the north to Merseyside and Manchester in South Lancashire and operated with Leyland Motors built buses. The head office was housed in a superb example of 1920's commercial architecture in Frenchwood at the confluence of Manchester Road, Frenchwood Avenue and Frenchwood Knoll. Ribble had depots in every major town in the North West from the large depots at Preston and Bootle, which accommodated close to one hundred vehicles to those of the Lake District at Ambleside, Bowness and Sedberg with at the most two buses. The last of the four was created by the Nationalisation of the Public Utilities in this case Electricity. The west Lancashire Area of the **North Western Electricity Board** was located in the first post war building to house office workers in Preston on Hartington Road, a site that Buffalo Bill and his travelling circus had occupied on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1904 to entertain the local populace. These diverse industries had shared aims as far as their employees were concerned. The first was a Sports and Social Club that created an atmosphere of camaraderie and team spirit and the second was an In House magazine produced on a monthly issue. Teams from Leyland Motors, English Electric and the North Western Electricity Board consisting of employees and managers competed very successfully in the Local Leagues at Football, Cricket and Crown Green Bowling. Ribble Motors and the North Western Electricity Board (NORWEB) who covered almost the same geographical area with their enterprises had in-house competitions with other depots and areas at such recreations as Darts, Snooker, Whist, Dominoes, Netball and Rounders. English Electric (Dick Kerr's) held an annual outdoor competition, that showcased the skills of the Fire Services attached to East and West Works, Warton and Samlesbury, needed to keep the workplace safe. The event was held alternately at Warton and Samlesbury aerodromes where staff and their families gave vocal support to the team from their particular workplace. After the presentation of trophies the very large contingent of supporters were treated to a slap up meal. In the case of NORWEB their employees graced the Cricket Field, Bowling Green and Netball Courts. In the basement of the Head Office there was a recreation room fitted out with snooker tables and dart boards as well as furniture to relax in after lunch. In-house competitions took place on a regular basis covering a wide range of activities. At the top of the list was the annual finals of the NORWEB sponsored Quiz competition with teams from each area taking part. This was held at NORWEB'S Daniel

Training Centre in Chorley. One of the benefits from the gathering was that employees could exchange work experiences in a relaxed atmosphere. The added bonus was of course a free meal. As for the North West's premier bus company, Ribble Motors, they had a licensed Sports and Social Club venue in the basement of Miller Arcade with the entrance in Jacson Street. It was here where drivers, conductors, mechanics and office staff congregated out of hours and 'put the world to rights'. The main topic of conversation on a Monday was the unsurpassed talents of Preston's favourite son. Ribble also had a well organised Football League registered with the Football Association that included seven of the large depots and Head Office. If any reader recognises any of the players in the picture named or otherwise we would be pleased to hear from you !



**Ribble Motors Head Office Football Team 1953/54**  
**Back Row : Gerry Eastham, ?, ?, Tommy Tingle, ?, ?, ?**,  
**Front Row : ?, Bill Devine, Denis Watson, Alan Heaton, Bill Keogh**

Each of the four companies provided facilities for the worker to partake in sporting activities. Dick Kerr's for instance owned Ashton Park where the Ladies Team practised. Leyland Motors built a football ground at Thurston Road, which was the envy of many clubs in the lower echelons of the Football League. In addition there is a Crown Green Bowling facility, laid down at the same time, which is still in use today. Both Leyland Motors and English Electric had enough players to field teams in all the divisions of the local major cricket and football leagues. The trophies won by these teams are still remembered today by the spectators of yesteryear. Two ex Preston North End players worked for NORWEB after their playing days were over. Tom Smith the captain of the 1938 FA Cup winning team was a section head at the HQ in Hartington Road and Bill Scott who was also a member of the Cup winning team worked in the Meter Fixing Department. In addition to the sporting side the company's magazine kept staff up to date with corporate plans as well as the achievements of their employees in activities outside the workplace. Employees could also buy and sell items listed in the magazine. All the magazines carried what was euphemistically called the '*Hatched, Matched and Despatched*' list.

Denis Watson (now residing in USA)

# MEMORIES OF THE FIRST ELEVEN YEARS OF A CAREER ON BRITISH RAILWAYS, INCLUDING LIGHTER MOMENTS

By Robin Bamber

**PRESTON O.D.M. DEPT – STAFF** .... Jack Bardo and John Burns (fitters); Stan Preston and Don Smith (electricians); Jock the Joiner, and Mates Neil Gabbott, Jim Butterworth, Harold Webster and Tommy Lee. Frank Batt was storekeeper and Irishman 'Clonmel John' was Oiler and Greaser. Jack drove an Austin A35 car, Stan had huge old bicycle with a 'Cyclemaster' engine on the rear wheel. I had my bike, but all the other staff came by bus or walked. The Depot had an old 'Bedford' van with sliding doors and column change gears. Our area of responsibility covered Preston, the Fylde, Southport, and Wigan, with staff outbased at Blackpool North (5), Southport (9) and Wigan Wallgate (8). Loco sheds in the area then were Preston (what was left of it), Lostock Hall, Blackpool Spen Dyke, Blackpool North, Fleetwood, Wigan Springs Branch and Wigan L & Y, and Southport. One of my first jobs, on a Sunday, together with John Burns and two mates was to renew flap valve on Lostock Hall Coaling Plant. This was the lever operated plate that directed coal to the front or rear of a loco tender as it came from the bunkers. An awkward dirty job, carried out whilst standing on the coal in a Black 5's tender, but we carried it out successfully despite being frozen stiff by a biting wind and rain squalls. Regular cups of tea kept us going ! The O.D.M. carried out maintenance on machinery in Christian Road Goods Depot, to the west of the station. Wagons were drawn by capstan into shed and unloaded via roller conveyors onto 'Scammell' three wheel wagons and trailers for local delivery. Empty rail wagons were traversed out of the shed and again drawn up by capstan, to be removed by a resident 'Jinty' for marshalling and despatch. Up until the early 1950's horses had been used for this delivery work, and had been replaced for the Yard work by a fleet of 'Scott' three wheeled electric trucks with hydraulic raise and lower platforms. These were used with the original horse-drawn drays, with the shafts removed. The 'Scott' was backed up to the dray and the hydraulic platform located under its front axle. The platform was then raised, lifting the dray's front wheels a few inches off the ground, and it was then trundled around the Yard for unloading goods direct from rail wagons. The old stables had been fitted out with battery chargers for the 'Scotts', and a section partitioned off as a workshop for vehicle maintenance. Many of the older drivers had been horsemen and still dressed in huge greatcoats, with sacking aprons and sacking capes over their shoulders, as it did get a bit 'parky' perched up on the open driving seat in all weathers. Whilst in our workshop in late afternoon we could hear the vehicles coming in for stabling and charging. One old driver could be heard saying 'Whoa, whoa, There' then 'Back, Back' and finally 'Good Boy, Good Lad' and could be seen patting his vehicle. When he'd gone we'd sometimes fasten a nosebag of hay to the front bumper for him to find in the morning. 'So and so comedians' he would growl at us, but one thing – he kept his vehicle immaculately cleaned and groomed ! One permanent memory of Christian Road is of walking round there down Fishergate one morning and meeting Mary, daughter of Freddie Grundy, the Preston Loco examiner, on her way to work in town. With her was another girl, who I didn't know then, but who was later to become my wife.

**WATER SUPPLIES** – Steam engines needed water, gallons of the stuff every shift. All Preston's loco water came from the Preston-Kendal canal. The pump house was in Fylde Road, on the north side of the West Coast main line Railway Bridge, in an arch beneath the

track. It was accessed through a door in the wall opposite the 'Hole in the Wall' public house. It was pumped firstly into a large tank on the trackside, treated with chemicals then piped down the trackside, supplying a storage tank at Pedder Street, in the Goods Yard opposite the loco shed, which fed all the hydrants and water columns at the shed, and on then to further storage tanks at Charles Street (next to 1A signalbox), East Cliff and Ribble Sidings. I never knew how Charles Street got its name till I read Bob Gregson's book on 'The LNWR around Preston' and discovered that it was a street that disappeared with the building of Christian Road Goods Yard. These tanks provided the head of water for all water columns in the area. The water also supplied the eight hydraulic lifts in use then on the station. This was further pressurised by a triple ram pump situated in the pump house at the north end of the then Platform 6, in an arch under the Station Approach Road, thence to an accummalator in a decrepit old wooden structure opposite in the corner of Butler Street wall and Fishergate bridge, visible on various old steam days pictures of Preston Station. The supply from the canal at Fylde Road was protected by sieves in the input chamber on the canal bank. Despite this, eels somehow managed to get into the system occasionally. One could tell by a glance at the pressure gauge on the pump whether it was clear, or whether it contained one or two eels, thus restricting the supply. If so, the pump cover had to be removed, followed by the unpalatable job of hacking a decomposing eel or two out of the pump impellor. Water from Fylde Road also supplied the big storage tank at Lostock Hall shed. A booster pump situated on the embankment near Vicar's Bridge at East Cliff pumped water up the East Lancs line trackside via Todd Lane to the tank. Also supplied from the canal were the water troughs at Brock, on the main line 7 miles north of Preston, and at Lea Road on the quadruple tracks leading to Blackpool, between Preston and Salwick.

**TANK CLEANING** - Periodically, all water storage tanks required cleaning out, to remove sludge and small fish, and to be treated inside with a coat of quick drying paint. This involved shutting off the water supply to the tank, as much as 48 hours earlier, allowing it to empty via the various columns. On the day scheduled for work, usually a Sunday, the tank drain valve was opened to remove the last few inches of water, the sludge was swept out and the tank dried with masses of cotton waste. The paint was then applied with long handled brushes, and the tank later refilled and put back into service. Tank capacity in the area varied from 5000 gallons (Charles St) to 75000 gallons at Carnforth loco shed (still standing today, a lovely relic from the Steam Era, together with the Coaling and Ash Plants). Water Troughs also required attention. They were drained and any leaking joints repaired and bits of ballast and rubbish removed from the levelling pipe between the troughs and the valve house, which could affect the water supply.

**LIFTS** – The eight hydraulic lifts on Preston Station then would horrify today's Health and Safety brigade – just a flat platform between brick walls, no sides or guards, conveying platform trolleys and staff between platform and Goods subway. The table was powered upwards, but lowered simply by release of the water in the cylinder, which allowed a controlled descent. The 6 inch diameter lifting ram was kept water tight by one inch square section tallow packing in the gland. Occasionally we would get a report that a lift would not raise. An ominous hissing sound from the cylinder pit told us that the intermediate or bottom cylinder joint had blown out. A lifting gantry was positioned at platform level over the lift shaft and the table removed and propped to one side. Then the complete cylinder and ram were lifted from the pit. The joints were made of 'GUTTA PERCHA', a natural hard latex of about 3/8 inch diameter that required forming into a ring and the ends lapped and heated to form a seal. This work was often carried out under the gaze of interested passengers gathered round the railings at platform level. This was 19<sup>th</sup> century technology, but really interesting work. **More next issue .....**

## A Preston Lad

Bus rides, fairs, processions, fireworks, childhood romance, first kiss from a lovely little girl who made things happen, a tom boy really. I had just got into bed when the bedroom door opened and Kath came gliding in. She pulled me out of bed and whispered 'Come on you !' She took me into her bedroom and explained this is what she liked doing for a while, the was a bedding box under the window and I joined her watching buses and people and the odd car passing by. It certainly did look different in the lamplight. After about ten minutes I said 'I'm tired, Goodnight Kath' and toddled back to my own room and fell asleep immediately, happy and contented. Normally I would lie in bed and muse about the day's happenings, wonder if I would reach that top note on Sunday, have a rethink about my composition. Where were the Urals ? Was the River Brahmaputra the second longest river in India ? Was it Bessemer who gave us steel ? What was that tackler's tale about ? Would Miss Hall go to hell and brimstone be piled on her ? And would she burn ? Was Miss Hall right, was I a bad'un ? I did solve one or two of my problems that way, when morning came they disappeared, and I knew I would be top of the class again at exam time, but this night on the most wonderful Sunday of my life I passed out like a light. Nature taking over, I couldn't have coped with all that day's happenings. Monday morning, the menfolk had arisen, had their breakfasts and gone off to work. When I awoke I could hear Kathleen singing something about the Rockies and spring, well, she called it singing ! I'll show her what singing is someday I thought to myself. I dressed quickly, hopping round the bedroom in my haste to get my trousers on. She was in the backyard, so I went out whistling. She called out to me, evidently in the lavatory, so I went and stood near the backyard gate. While she was talking to me she opened the toilet door to carry on with our conversation better. My face must have been a picture, there was this talkative, naïve child of ten, with no concern at all, blithely yapping away, sat with her bloomers round her ankles as if it were the most natural thing in the world. I bet there wasn't a boy in the whole of England who had witnessed such a spectacle. I retreated out of her line of vision. 'Come here when I am talking to you' she shouted. 'Well, you get dressed first' I spluttered. 'Breakfast is ready' shouted the lovely housekeeper, breaking the spell which I was under. I sat down after I had said my grace and Kathleen followed. I said 'You have not washed your hands'. 'They're not dirty' she retorted. 'You've been to the petty' I said. 'Well !' I gave up. She was the most embarrassing person I had ever met in my life, but she was so wonderful. I had never been in female company before, I didn't particularly like girls, but Kathleen was different. If I could have been in her company regular I suppose she would have brought me out as I know I was shy and retiring and inclined to blush easily. Breakfast over, we washed the pots and sat around till 9 o'clock. By then the shops would have been open and we could go and fetch the bread. Tuppence was given to us and we were told to get a lightly baked loaf from Stopfords the bakers across the way. Hough Lane and Towngate were much quieter than they had been on Saturday. Men were busy sweeping and collecting the rubbish that was the aftermath of the weekend's festivities. Errands completed we strolled down the streets looking cursory in any shop that took her fancy. Kathleen knew her way round Leyland quite well and suggested we walked Turpin Green way, past Balshaw's Grammar School and arrive at Leyland Cross. We took out time, just sauntered, while she told me about her home life, her parents, where she lived and which school she attended. Her school was St Emmanuel's, in Preston, of course. She

asked if I would be walking in the Whitsuntide Procession the following Monday, which was Whit Monday. I replied 'Of course, I have to as I am in the choir, I'll be at the front'. Kath said 'I will be in the procession as well, as I go to Sunday School'. Anyway those days everyone went to Sunday School, it was as natural as going to school, even the grown ups as well. There was a Bible class for men, they even had their own football teams and played other Sunday School teams on Saturday afternoons. 'Well' said Kath, 'I will keep a look out for St Mary's banner and you look out for St Emmanuel's and we should spot each other'. 'Don't forget will you, Eric, promise'. I duly promised thinking what good ideas she had. 'I will wave and blow you a kiss' she enthused. 'Just wave' I said, 'everybody will see you'. 'So what!' she answered. By then we had got to Bent Lane and half way down she pulled me off the pavement onto the grass, it was an open field with public right of way. 'It's a short cut and more exciting'. Wondering what she meant I followed, well not followed as I was walking with her. Across the field we came to some railings, it was the railway line and the public footpath went right across it, with a sign saying 'Look Both Ways'. It was all new and strange to me, walking over a railway line, back home we got chased if we wandered onto the Miller Park/Avenham Park railway. We sat on the railings for a while, watched a few trains pass going to Wigan and places beyond, others going to Preston and Blackpool. At length we climbed down and daringly crossed over when it was clear. Fancy doing exciting things like this at the whim of a girl. She was certainly full of surprises. Reaching the main road we passed Balshaws and came to the Parish Church across from the War Memorial and at the rear of that a tract of spare land. It wasn't spare now it was a bee hive of activity. All the fairground people we busy dismantling the roundabouts and would no doubt soon be on their way to Preston Market. The small roundabouts and merry go rounds and stalls called at places like Tardy Gate and Bamber Bridge to make a bob or two till their place was ready for them at Preston. I think the big one stayed on at Leyland a few more days. We spent a while watching this busy scene the men were very adept at it. Down Towngate past the local market and we were soon back to number 7. Mr Thornley had asked to be allowed to finish work earlier than usual, as at half past three I would start my return journey back to the Home. Naturally, dinner was a sombre affair. In a few hours my sojourn with all these lovely people would be over. I was allowed to choose what I wanted for my midday meal, so I chose chips and fish from the chippy. We had fish on Wednesdays at the orphanage, but never with chips or from the chip shop. I enjoyed them and realised it would be a long time before I partook of them again. Mr Thornley had half an hour for dinner and always had a little nap before he went back to work. But today he couldn't do it, and I realised the strain of the ordeal of taking me back to the orphanage was unsettling him, as it was my little friend Kathleen. I stopped in the house till it was time to go, so I would not get dirty playing out, and so the dreaded time got nearer. Kathleen asked if she could accompany us, but Grandad said 'better not'. She entreated me to be a good boy then you can come again. 'Promise' I said, 'I try to be good, but she is always finding fault'. At last it was departure time, Kathleen kissed me in the passage. 'I'll look for you on Monday on Walking Day' she said. 'I look for you' I promised. But ..... apart from spotting her on two Whitsun walking days I never saw her again, and all because of a damn bloody rubber ball !!!!

By Arthur Eric Crook (1917 – 1997)

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## Rhymes of a Red Cross Man by Robert W. Service (1876 – 1958)

### The Fool

"But it isn't playing the game," he said,  
And he slammed his books away;

"The Latin and Greek I've got in my head  
Will do for a duller day."

"Rubbish!" I cried; "The bugle's call  
Isn't for lads from school."

D'ye think he'd listen? Oh, not at all:  
So I called him a fool, a fool.

Now there's his dog by his empty bed,  
And the flute he used to play,  
And his favourite bat . . . but Dick he's dead,  
Somewhere in France, they say:  
Dick with his rapture of song and sun,  
Dick of the yellow hair,  
Dicky whose life had but begun,  
Carrion-cold out there.

Look at his prizes all in a row:  
Surely a hint of fame.  
Now he's finished with,—nothing to show:  
Doesn't it seem a shame?  
Look from the window! All you see  
Was to be his one day:  
Forest and furrow, lawn and lea,  
And he goes and chucks it away.

Chucks it away to die in the dark:  
Somebody saw him fall,  
Part of him mud, part of him blood,  
The rest of him—not at all.  
And yet I'll bet he was never afraid,  
And he went as the best of 'em go,  
For his hand was clenched on his broken blade,  
And his face was turned to the foe.

And I called him a fool . . . oh how blind was I!  
And the cup of my grief's abrim.  
Will Glory o' England ever die  
So long as we've lads like him?  
So long as we've fond and fearless fools,  
Who, spurning fortune and fame,  
Turn out with the rallying cry of their schools,  
Just bent on playing the game.

A fool! Ah no! He was more than wise.  
His was the proudest part.  
He died with the glory of faith in his eyes,  
And the glory of love in his heart.  
And though there's never a grave to tell,  
Nor a cross to mark his fall,  
Thank God! we know that he "batted well"  
In the last great Game of all.

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