

**Issue 14**  
**April 2014**

# **The Lostock Hall Magazine**

**Stephen Valentine Parr**

**Stories from the Mill by Ken Berry**

**A 'not so light' Engine**

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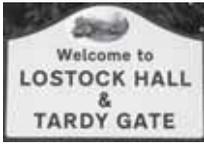
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Welcome to the April 2014 (15th) issue of The LOSTOCK Hall Magazine, which also covers Tardy Gate and nearby parts of Farington. It is a collection of local history articles relating to the area. Many thanks to all our contributors and readers.

Our thanks to Penwortham Priory Academy who support us by printing and formatting the magazine. Please support our local advertisers without them we could not produce our magazine.

**A copy of each issue will be kept in the Lancashire Records Office.**

**Jackie Stuart has kindly allowed us to serialise her book entitled 'A Tardy Gate Girl'. This month we have memories from Tony Billington, John Pearson, Wilf Riley, Ken Berry and Audrey Parr.**

This year being the centenary of the first world war we are looking for any photos and memories of family members you may like to share in the magazine. **We are also collecting material for South Ribble Remembrance Archive 1914-1918, which will include anything relating to World War One in our area. A photo, document, a memory, etc.**

**Joan Langford's new book is now out entitled 'Lest We Forget' which is the eighth book in the series 'Farington – a Lancashire Cotton Mill Village' – a series of books now much sought after. Joan was asked especially to produce this book to record the lives of the men of Farington who died during World War 1.**

**You can contact Joan on 01772 436505 or email [joanlangford@talktalk.net](mailto:joanlangford@talktalk.net)**

**Lostock Hall Youth Band** are looking for new players or even learners, to swell their ranks. We rehearse Fridays 6.45 to 7.45 pm in Lostock Hall Bandroom adjacent to the Victoria Hotel, Watkin Lane, Lostock Hall. All are welcome from beginners to a little more experienced brass musicians. For further information have a look at our web site [lostockhallbrassband.co.uk](http://lostockhallbrassband.co.uk) or telephone Ron Heyes on 01772 463187

If you have any memories you would like to submit to the magazine for publication, please do contact me, especially memories from our old residents, because once the memories are gone they are lost forever. I would like to do a feature on one of the mills, if there is anyone willing to share their memories.

Have a look on Flickr at the Lostock Hall group of photographs, please upload any you would like to share. Copies of the magazine will always be available at Lostock Hall Library on Watkin Lane. Contact me to have your own copy delivered each month or to receive it by email.

Front Cover image – The Iron Steps, Lostock Hall.

### **Our Contact Details**

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## Photos from Lostock Hall Past



**Thomas Moss C.C. 1967** – Chorley & District Cricket League Division 2 Champions  
(also 1965 and 1966)

Back Row – Jack Bland, Lennie Eaves, George Jones, Dave Wilson, Alf Hayes, Stan Rudman, Steve Pye. Front Row – Tony Billington and Lennie Newell. Photo Courtesy of Tony Billington.



**Victoria Pub circa. late 50's**

Tommy Bleasdale, Gordon Sale, George Armer, Colin Schofield and Tommy Billington.  
Courtesy of Tony Billington.

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## Articles from Lostock Hall Past

**RURAL POLICE** – In your Chronicle of last Saturday is a paragraph, headed 'Inefficiency of Rural Police' signed 'A Churchman'. He asks can you inform him if there are any police that are stationed at Farington ? You will allow me to answer for you, and to tell this very officious 'Churchman' there is none; but in the village of Leyland are stationed two policemen, who regularly visit Farington during divine service, on Sunday, and also on every other day when going their rounds through a large district. With respect to the police who are at present stationed at Leyland, I, with many other respectable men, can vouch for their efficiency and general good conduct. I think you Correspondent would have rendered a service to the public, if he laid the names of those police who are in the habit of getting drunk and living with immoral women, before the chief superintendent, who, no doubt, would have made an example of them. I trust, the next Sunday, Mr Churchman takes a notion of a walk between Preston and Leyland, that it wont be during the hours of divine service – a time when every good churchman should be engaged in devotion. Yours &c., TOMMY COTTON, Leyland March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1842.  
**Preston Chronicle 26 March 1842**

**FATAL FALL DOWN A HOIST** – Mr W Ascroft, deputy coroner, held an inquest at Cuerden on Saturday, relative to the death of a lad named **William Wilkinson**, aged 16, who was killed at the **Lostock Spinning Mill**, on Friday. The deceased was employed at the mill, and on Friday was climbing to the top of a hoist when he accidentally fell to the ground and was killed. A verdict of 'Accidentally killed' was returned.  
**Preston Chronicle 28 July 1877**

**FATAL RAILWAY ACCIDENT** – An inquest was held on Monday, by Mr Ashcroft, coroner for Walton-le-Dale, near Preston, on the body of **Edwin Walton**, aged 38 years. The deceased was a pointsman in the employ of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company at the ground points in the goods yard at Lostock Hall Station, near Bamber Bridge, and went off duty at six o'clock on Friday night. At 7 45 his dead body was found lying in a siding, the left leg severed from it, and it was found that several ribs were broken and that he was otherwise injured. It is believed that when he was crossing the yard on leaving work he was knocked down by some wagons that were shunted to a Fleetwood train, and that he was run over. He has left a widow and six children. The jury returned the verdict of accidentally killed.  
**The Lancaster Gazette 31 December 1884**

**FATALITY ON A RAILWAY** - On Tuesday evening an inquest was held by Mr Gilbertson, at Lostock Hall, near Preston, on the body of **Thomas Culshaw**, aged 39, a guard on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, who was killed on Monday afternoon. The deceased was sitting on the brake lever of a waggon when he fell backwards, and was run over by the train. He was fearfully mutilated, and died immediately afterwards. A verdict of accidental death was returned. It was stated that it was against regulations to ride on the levers.  
**The York Herald 28 May 1885**

**FOOTBALL** – In the draw for the Lancashire Challenge Cup, which took place on Wednesday night, Preston North End meet Halliwell, Blackpool Olympic play Great Harwood, Darwen oppose Southport, and the Blackburn Rovers try conclusions with Lostock Hall. The first round is to be finished by Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>.  
**The Hull Packet and East Riding Times 21 August 1885**

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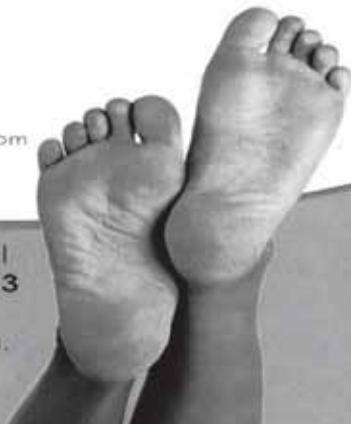
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# 'Half time' certificate for Lostock Hall Schoolgirl

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Local Education Authority COUNTY OF LANCASHIRE—No. 7 Area.

**LABOUR CERTIFICATE, No. 2 (for partial exemption only).**

AGE AND EMPLOYMENT.	PREVIOUS ATTENDANCE.
<p>I certify that <u>Edith Ellen Taylor</u>, residing at <u>6 Wilkinson Street, Lostock Hall</u>, was, on the <u>10<sup>th</sup></u> day of <u>December</u> 190<u>2</u>, not less than <u>twelve</u> years of age, having been born on the <u>10<sup>th</sup></u> day of <u>December</u> 189<u>3</u>, as appears by the Registrar's Certificate (or the Statutory Declaration) now produced to me, and has been shown to the satisfaction of the local education authority for this district to be beneficially employed.</p> <p>(Signed) <u>Robert Martin</u> School Attendance Officer.</p>	<p>I certify that <u>Edith Ellen Taylor</u>, residing at <u>6 Wilkinson Street, Lostock Hall</u>, has made 200 attendances in not more than two schools during each year for five preceding years, whether consecutive or not, as shown by the (?) certificate furnished by the Principal Teacher of the (?) <u>Cuerden</u> School.</p> <p>(Signed) <u>Robert Martin</u> School Attendance Officer.</p> <p>Dated the <u>11<sup>th</sup></u> day of <u>Dec</u> 190<u>2</u>.</p>

When the Child is not working this Certificate is suspended, and the Child must attend School full time.

This certificate was made out to Edith Ellen Taylor, who lived at 6 Wilkinson Street, Lostock Hall. She was born on the 10<sup>th</sup> December, 1893. The certificate was signed by the School Attendance Officer. The certificate was given to her whilst in education at Cuerden School. Ellen, known as Nellie attended Cuerden School up to the age of ten when she went onto the new Lostock Hall Council School, in Avondale Drive. Nellie worked in the mill in Ward Street into adult age.

Nellie's daughter was Connie Sumner who married Reg Birchenough. Connie and Reg were bus driver and conductress who worked for Ribble buses in the 1960/70s. Connie's daughter is Gillian Riley. All children who worked half time were given a certificate. When not working part time they had to attend school full time. While working and at school the children were known as 'Half Timers'.

**Image and information sent in by Wilf Riley.**

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## Lostock Hall Spinning Company Sports Day c.1957



*Back row - Tony Billington, Mick Perry, Peter Rimmer.*

*Middle Row - Billy Cheetham, Alan Wilding, Tommy Fishwick, Dorothy Roscoe, Sylvia Miller, Keith Smith.*

*Front Row - Steve Seed, David Bird, Eugene Forshaw, Neil Hubberstey (with dog) Carol Jameson, Tommy Miller, Ernie Pilkington, John Preston.*

I have a few recollections of the Annual Lostock Hall Spinning Company Sports Day, in fact when Tommy Fishwick showed me the photograph I don't even remember it being taken. It was held annually on Saturdays during the Summer Holidays on the field next to the factory. Spinning Company employees and relatives were allowed to take part. My older sister worked there and her event involved sitting in a wheelbarrow pushed by a man. They had to go under an archway with a piece of wood holding a bucket of water. The object of the exercise was to push a brush handle through a hole in the wood just beneath the bucket. If you missed the hole and hit the wood ... splash, drenching ! Children took part in egg and spoon, sack, wheelbarrow and 3 legged races. The main event was the greasy pole. A flagpole was placed across the factory lodge (4 ft deep, dirty stagnant water). It was greased and combatants used a sack full of straw, sitting astride the pole, the aim to knock their opponent off and into the grimy depths. One particular chap used to cram as much straw as possible in the sack with his foot, soak it in the water then deliver a haymaker ! Local ice-cream man Johnny Flanagan lived adjoining the spinning company field and opened up a large shed to sell ice-cream, pop, etc. What I do remember was it was always a great day out and weren't the summers always hotter and drier in those days ! (seemed that way).

As there wasn't much else going on in Lostock Hall in those days, it really was a big event. Halcyon Days, never to be repeated alas. **Tony Billington**

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# Stephen Valentine Parr

S V PARR

Private

10501

2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Scots Guards

who died on Monday, 23 July, 1917. Age 23

He was the son of Robert and Ann Alice Parr, of 7 Heskin Terrace, Lostock Hall  
Valentine was his mother's maiden name.

He is buried at Duhallow A.D.S. Cemetery in Ieper, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium.

He is remembered on Lostock Hall War Memorial, Penwortham War Memorial, St Pauls War Memorial Tablet and St Marys War Memorial Tablet, Penwortham.

When his mother moved to 1 Flag Lane, she named the house 'DUHALLOW' after the cemetery where he was buried.  
Stephen lived at 7 Heskin Terrace, which is now 404 Leyland Road, on the Penwortham side of Coote Lane.



*Photo 1 (above)* shows S V Parr's medals that were received by his parents, along with the death penny that were presented to all soldiers who were killed.



*Photo 2 (left)* Shows his nephew Stephen Parr visiting his grave at the cemetery. His nephew lived in Harold Terrace.

*Photo 3(below)* Shows Captain Wooldridge's Squad, of the Scots Guards, taken in 1914, Stephen Parr is one of the men.

**Information and photographs kindly provided by Stephen and Audrey Parr, who were his nephew and niece.**

The **Memorial Plaque** was issued after the First World War to the next-of-kin of all British and Empire service personnel who were killed as a result of the war. The plaques (more strictly described as plaquettes) were made of bronze, and hence popularly known as the "Dead Man's

Penny", because of the similarity in appearance to the somewhat smaller penny coin. 1,355,000 plaques were issued, which used a total of 450 tonnes of bronze,[1] and continued to be issued into the 1930s to commemorate people who died as a consequence of the war. Wikipedia.



# A 'NOT SO LIGHT ENGINE'

*By Tony Billington*



*'East Lancs Bridge courtesy of David Eaves'*

Almost 50 years ago a near tragedy occurred on the old Preston to Blackburn East Lancs Line not far from Todd Lane Junction. It was on Good Friday night, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1965, when a few of us were returning home from Preston to Lostock Hall after watching Preston North End beat Charlton Athletic 2-1, in an old Division Two fixture, courtesy of two Alex Dawson goals, one a penalty. I cannot recall who were in the gang of 15 and 16 year olds that night but it's a darn good bet that Joe Johnson, Billy Deans and Brian Sherliker were among the 6 or 7 of us. We had walked back into Preston Town Centre via Deepdale Road and Meadow Street and down the old Tithebarn Street past the old bus station.

We called at the chip shop in Cross Street down Avenham and having spent our bus fares on the rare delights on offer, pre Chinese, Indian, Thai, Turkish, Italian, etc., we headed off through Avenham Park and onto the Ribble Bridge, which carried the East Lancs Line towards Todd Lane Junction and beyond. Having climbed up the steep steps out of the park onto the bridge we were then faced with the formidable fence, which separated the walkway from the track on the Ribble Bridge.

The fence itself wasn't too bad, it was the vicious spikes on top which made us think twice, having just discovered the opposite sex and a nasty accident beckoned. The spikes were there to deter trespassers ! We climbed over the wall at the far end of the bridge and onto the track. We headed home in pitch black conditions still eating our chips etc., when somebody suddenly remarked that as it was Good Friday, I was a Catholic etc., what was I doing eating a meat pie ! What was left of the pie hastily disappeared towards Tram Road and I suddenly realised what I had done and waited for the bolt of lightning to hit me from above!

We picked our way towards Lostock Hall Gasworks, it really was dark and passed the skeletal remains of the Whitehouse Junction North signal box made redundant several months earlier. Passing the distant lights of the Vernons Factory and Whitehouse Junction South signal box we inched steadily closer to the Gasworks Bridge, which formed the boundary of Wateringpool Lane and Hennel Lane beneath. Approximately 50 yards from the bridge someone suddenly cried out, 'Can you hear someat ?'

The rails on either side of us began rattling as we stepped across the wooden sleepers in between. Looking round we saw a tiny dim light approaching from Preston, getting larger by the second. Someone shouted 'Jump' and we all flew in different directions just in time to see a huge black monster hurtle past towards Todd Lane Junction. We all got up from the trackside, breathing heavily and suddenly realised how close we'd come to meeting our maker. Then someone piped up 'Billington's fault for eating that meat pie on Good Friday !' Someone else stated quite calmly that it was a Fairburn Tank travelling light.

For Non-Railway lovers this meant that it was an engine minus carriages, wagons, etc., which is probably why we never heard it. We reached the sanctuary of the bridge and climbed down the sloping wall, over the wooden fence and onto 'Terra Firma', Wateringpool Lane. It was a valuable lesson learned as I never set foot on that stretch of ground again for over 20 years.

This was courtesy of Dr. Beeching who wielded his huge axe 3 years later (1968) and left us with a safe haven in which to walk or cycle from Lostock Hall to Preston along the old railway trackbed. The 'light' engine was far from being 'light' in an illuminating way and it so nearly cost us our lives. Maybe a combination of trespassing and eating forbidden meat pies was a stark warning from above !

**PLEASE SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS**

# Mr Albert Taylor

This article from December 1952 was sent to us by Mr Albert Taylor (81) who for many years has lived in Cricklade, Swindon, he enjoys reading the magazine.

## **A years soldiering in Korea.**

### **Albert's homecoming is Lostock Hall parents' best Christmas present.**

At 204 Browndge Road, Lostock Hall, it is going to be the happiest Christmas in three years for Mr and Mrs Albert Taylor, and 14 year old Rex, the family dog.

For up the garden path early yesterday morning walked 20 year old Trooper Albert Taylor, back from a year in Korea and home for good after two years in the library. It was 14 months since Albert had last been home. There was a handshake from Dad a kiss from mother and an excited wag of a tail from Rex. Albert, of the 57<sup>th</sup> Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, was on board the Devonshire, which docked at Liverpool on December 20<sup>th</sup>, after being held up four days by bad weather.

Mother's Christmas present from him is a real China tea set, and some silver spoons, bought in Japan for £2 10s. For Dad there is a silver engraved cigarette case and lighter 'Made in Japan' for 5s 5d. And Albert has treated himself to half a dozen spun silk shirts. In England, they would have cost 15s. each, he bought the six in Japan for £2. Albert, a wireless operator, saw no fighting but said all the boys in Korea 'Are in good spirits, get good food, American rations, including fresh pork chops and beef. Receive letters three times a week, although they are 8 to 10 days late, Have no grumbles I can think of. Albert is amongst the first National Service soldiers to be demobbed from Korea. He is one of the first soldiers to come to the Preston District with the South Korean medal ribbon – blue and yellow vertical stripes – and the United Nations ribbon – blue and white vertical stripes – stitched on his uniform.

But soon uniforms and medals will be forgotten, as Albert, formerly training to be a joiner and undertaker settles down once again to civilian life.

**Lancashire Evening Post, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1952**

Albert would love to hear from any old friends who remember him, especially Brian Cowley and Cynthia Dale.



## Lancashire Schools Cup 1953

We would like to point out some mistakes in issue 13 of your magazine. We are a group of "old" school friends who meet up on a regular basis and four of us played in the team, which represented Lostock Hall Council School in the Lancashire Schools Cup against Blackpool Palatine. The year was 1953 not 1954 and the photo printed is the wrong team. We enclose a photo of the correct team the line up as follows; back left to right; W. Sutton, M. Thompson, R Barrow, B Cole, N. Crossley, R. Parry, A Stephens. Front row left to right; Wilson, F. Dowling, S. Alty (c) T. Walmsley, R. Braithwaite. E. Alty was captain and also scored. We were indeed treated to lunch at Lostock Hall private hotel. The ex-mayor of South Ribble Norman Crossley is also a friend of ours and who played that day and is currently in Lostock Hall. He can verify our assertions are correct. We hope you will print an amendment. From Eric Alty, Melvyn Thompson, Bill Sutton, and Roland Braithwaite.



**Lostfest 2014**

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> May**

**From 12 noon till 8 pm**

*St Gerards Football Pitch, Wateringpool Lane.*

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## **Stories from the Mill by Ken Berry**

My father Joe Berry started working at Tardy Gate Mill in 1962. I have a special memory of this time because my father was faced with a decision which could have changed the course of my life. He had worked at Bute Mill in Essex Street, Preston as a tackler until the mill was due to close. The management tried, as far as possible to find alternative employment for the workers and my father was offered a job at Tardy Gate Mill along with several others from Bute Mill. It soon became clear that those who had worked at Tardy Gate Mill for a number of years felt some resentment towards the newcomers. After trying his best to fit in and make some friends my father felt that he was never going to be accepted and decided that perhaps the time had come to move elsewhere. It was the year when I was due to move from primary school to secondary school and so my father began searching for fresh employment. After investigating the possibility of moving into social work he found an opportunity of employment at Wray near Bentham with Wenning Silks. We spent many weekends in Bentham, looking for a house and for a new school. Eventually my name was put down for Bentham Grammar and my father put a deposit on a house in Bentham. On the following Friday my father went to the manager at Tardy Gate Mill to hand in his notice. The manager asked why he wanted to leave and then made a proposition to my father. "I'm very sorry that you are thinking of leaving because we were going to offer you the position of mill manager if you are willing to take it". My father was completely taken by surprise at this and said that he didn't think that he was suitable because he was still seen as an outsider by many of the workers. "Well we have considered that and we still believe that you are the best person for the job. I want you to go away and consider my offer over the weekend and let me know your decision on Monday morning". My parents hardly slept over that weekend. They had got themselves prepared both practically and mentally for the move from Penwortham to Bentham with all that it would involve in leaving behind all that we knew for a different life in Bentham. In the end my father decided to accept the offer of manager at Tardy Gate and the rest, as they say is history. In the event he soon settled into his new role.

Soon after he became manager it was decided that a continental shift pattern would be adopted, working 6am to 2pm, 2pm to 10pm and 10pm to 6am. The original plan was that workers would rotate around each of the shifts but very few local people wanted to work nights and most of the Asians preferred nights so it was agreed that the night shift would remain on permanent nights and the two day shifts would swap over each week. The manager on the other day shift was Jimmy Smith from Rufford. On occasions my father went in to work on a Saturday and it was a real treat when I was allowed to go with him. I'm not sure that it would be allowed these days but I could wander around the mill and study all the various bits of machinery and play with pallet trucks, overhead hoists and watch the maintenance crew moving looms. It was on one of these Saturday treats that I first met Jimmy Smith's son, Brian, who went on to found Rufford Printing Company, which is still trading. Even as a child I seemed to have an aptitude for practical things and always enjoyed studying how things worked and trying to understand what they did. There was often a new bit of equipment in a corner to study and one particular piece took my eye. It looked like a series of very narrow looms joined together in a row. That was unusual in itself but what caught my curious eye was the fact that the narrow strips of cloth coming from the looms did not wind around a cloth roller as was the case with all the other looms. Instead it seemed to curl and twist in a peculiar manner and simply fell through a slot into what looked like a tea chest. When my father saw me studying it he explained what was going on. The looms were in fact weaving shirt collars, which, in order to keep the pattern

running round the collar have to be woven with a slight curve in the weave. This was done using a slightly tapered beam containing the warp which then put more tension on one side than on the other, pulling the cloth round into a curve. This explained why the cloth could not wind onto a roller.

The mill was known as Thomas Moss's mill when my father stated work there but it became Viyella, Viyella International and then Carrington Viyella. The Carrington centre in Eccleston gets it's name from the mill and head offices of Carrington Viyella.

The mill shop was a treasure trove of cheap items from within the Viyella combine. There was always a good supply of shirts, which were labelled as seconds. Most of the cloth woven at the mill went to make shirts such as Peter England and Double Two. The cloth went from the mill to the finishers who washed, dyed and treated the cloth to produce the required end product. As the finishing process was a continuous process it meant that each 100 yard length of raw cloth was roughly stitched to the next piece before it went into the finishing machines so that they could run almost without a break for hours on end. The finished cloth was then folded and put through a band saw, which cut out the shirt panels ready for sewing together by skilled and very fast machinists. Since they worked at such a speed they didn't have time to look at the pieces of fabric which they were sewing together and so at some point in a pile of shirt panels they would come to the point at which one length of cloth had been stitched to the next. This, of course was a very rough seam running right across the pile of cloth at that point. Strange though it may seem it was cheaper to look for the seam after the shirts had been sewn together than it was to pick out the faulty panels from the pile. This meant that some of the shirts in the mill shop had a rough seam across them at some point. This was fine if they were to be used for gardening but on some the fault was so subtle that they were undetectable to the untrained eye. For example they would be rejected if the label in the collar was not stitched in straight. I can't say that I have ever found that to be a problem and so I had a ready supply of very good shirts at £2.00 each if my memory serves me correctly. There were several unusual fabrics woven, one being "battery cloth". It was a terylene fabric with pockets woven into it. Lead plates were placed in the pockets and were used in the manufacture of lead acid batteries.

Fabric for typewriter ribbon had to be totally free of imperfections and available in vast lengths for the impregnating process when the ink was applied. The way this was achieved was to weave the cloth as a tube on a special loom. This could produce the usual 100 yard length of cloth. The tube was the slit into a narrow strip going round and round the tube. The end result was miles of narrow ribbon without any joins. My father told many stories of incidents in the mill. One involved a Jamaican lady who was employed as a sweeper. My father saw her on several occasions leaning on her brush instead of working and eventually decided to have a polite word. She took offence at this and hit my father across the head with the brush. Needless to say she was sacked on the spot for assault. By this time I was working at the Employment Exchange in Preston and had to interview the woman when she came in to claim her unemployment benefit. It was the normal practice to make enquiries from the last employer to find the reason for leaving. The unemployed person was then allowed to put their side of the story. When confronted with the allegation that she had hit the mill manager with a brush she replied that the brush slipped!

More next month .....

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# A Tardy Gate Girl by Jackie Stuart

In February 1967 I discovered I was pregnant. I didn't believe it at the time. We had only had sex a couple of times in the January. I had to tell my mother, but I decided I would wait until I had played in the hockey tournament in April. Well we won all nine matches and were champions of the hockey league. I decided I had to tell her when I got home. I was given three options. I could sit in a hot bath and drink quinine to get rid of the baby, go into an unmarried mother's home, or get married. I refused point blank to the first two suggestions, so I had to get married. My dad wasn't speaking to me at the time because there had been some trouble between Bernard and my brother at Christmas. There had been a fight between them and I was blamed. I wasn't my fault, but no one would listen. When my mother told my dad I was pregnant, I was told to get out of the house. I felt very hurt by this, but I had hurt him too. The same situation did not seem to arise when my brother had to get married. He was living away from home anyway at the time. The shame seemed to be greater with me than it did with him, but perhaps I was imagining it. My wedding day was the 3rd June 1967 at the Registry Office in Preston. My dad would not come out of his shed that morning. I had asked him the night before if he would come to the wedding but he flatly refused. Before I went, I went into the shed to say goodbye, but he would not answer. My mother, sister-in-law and Mrs Walker came to watch me, then went home. We didn't have a reception, or a cake or even a honeymoon. We went to Bernard's sister Margaret's house for our dinner. Margaret was furious with Bernard and his Aunt Ellen for leaving me for hours waiting for them to come home from the pub, before we could eat our dinner. In the evening we went to Blackpool with Margaret and Andy her husband.

On our return from Blackpool we went to live in Hammond Street in Preston with Bernard's Aunt Kate. I carried on working at Provincial Insurance until the end of September. One November evening while I was heavily pregnant we went out to a local club. Bernard spent most of the evening talking to the artist. She was a singer and had a sore throat, so Bernard bought her several brandies. When we returned home I made us both a cup of tea. Bernard said that he didn't want his, so I poured it down the sink. He then changed his mind and threw a right paddy when I told him I had thrown it away. I had to go to the outside toilet, so he locked the door and left me outside in the freezing cold for a while. On Saturday the 25th November, 1967 at 2.25 am I gave birth to my daughter Helen Louise at Sharoe Green Hospital. She weighed 7lb 6oz, had long black hair, a squashed up nose and the most beautiful violet coloured eyes. I thought before the birth that I knew everything about the birds and the bees. Boy! I soon realised just how ignorant I really was. I knew nothing about babies and relied solely on being told what to do and when to do it by the nurses. My mother and dad came to see me while I was in hospital. It had taken some time, but they had forgiven me for my mistakes.

The following Saturday I took Helen home. You had to stay in hospital for seven days then, and for the following seven days you were supposed to stay indoors to guard against infection. I remember feeling very scared of having the responsibility of a baby. There was no one to tell me what to do and no one to ask. They expected me to know it all and I didn't. There was no food in the house and no baby things for Helen and nobody would offer to go and get anything. Bernard and his Aunt Kate just sat by the fire smoking and drinking cups of tea. I put my coat on and went to do the shopping. I felt so useless and helpless and so alone. Martin and Karen my nephew and niece arrived with a pram and cradle that my brother and his wife had bought. They had walked from the Larches estate

to Hammond Street in the freezing cold. It wasn't all that far really but they were only 12 and 11 years old. I was so glad to see them and grateful to have the baby things that day. The midwife came to see us on the Monday and helped me tremendously. She was supposed to visit us on the Saturday we arrived home, but no one had informed her that we had been released from hospital.

At Christmas time when Helen was just one month old, Bernard and I were told that we had to get out of the house. I remember that I was bathing Helen at the time. The front door opened and in walked this black coated man, in a black bowler hat, and told us we had to leave. I thought at the time that he looked like Scrooge. Luckily we were on the council waiting list and we were offered a house at Seven Stars in Leyland for the following month. We only had a double bed and a cot for Helen, so we had to buy any second hand furniture that we could afford to get.

We settled into our new home, but I soon found out that I was very lonely. At least in Hammond Street I had Aunt Kate to talk to and could walk into Preston to shop. Married life was not what I expected at all. I was on my own all day. Bernard went out every night so I became very disillusioned. As the saying goes I had made my bed and I must lay on it. I was determined to make things work, but my life-style had changed considerably, while Bernard still lived the life of a bachelor. I had a baby to look after and run a household as well. This was all still very new to me and alien too. To while away the time in the evening I joined the local library and started reading again. I hadn't read very much in my teenage years, but the loneliness had created a need for escapism again. I also started knitting and making baby clothes for Helen. I went to the baby clinic on Tuesdays and became friends with two other mothers there. Each Friday we would walk into Leyland to go shopping at the market, and call into the café on the way back. Helen would never sit the right way round in her pram. She had to look over the hood, while the other two babies would sit perfectly still in their prams. By the time we got back home, Helen's pram would be a complete shambles. Some Saturdays we would visit my mum and dad. After one visit Dad called to me very softly saying 'Have you seen it? (it being Helen) 'Its just taken its first steps'. Sure enough she had started walking on the day she was eleven months old.

During this same year my brother and his wife had another daughter Jeanette, their seventh child.

When Helen was just a year old I very nearly went bonkers. I wanted to smash all the mirrors and windows in the house. The doctor said that I was depressed and put me on valium. That was not the answer though. Looking back now, I suppose this was Post Natal Depression, but it was not recognised as such then. No one ever spoke about it. Nowadays it is more readily recognised and accepted. I think that I had suffered from the very first day I had come home from hospital. Part of the problem was that I had no life outside the house other than shopping. I had Helen to look after which I loved doing, but there had to be more to life than that. There was something missing but I didn't know what it was.

Six months later I was walking through Leyland with my Dad and Helen. We stopped to look at cars in a showroom window. There was a notice in the window advertising a clerical job. My Dad encouraged me to go in and ask about it. I did just that and got it, but first I had to organise a baby minder for the following Monday. A friend called Janet who also had a little girl offered to look after Helen for me. Janet was a real gem. She would tidy up the house for me and light the fire. More next month !

## St Gerards Infants Miss Baldwins Class of 1945.



Miss Baldwins class of boys for 1945. St Gerards RC School.

The photograph was taken in Miss Baldwin's Classroom and the photographer told us to select a toy from one of the two toy boxes.....I cannot remember playing with the toys but I do recall the two toy boxes.

The photograph from left to right:

Partially hidden is Geoffrey Rawlinson and next to him is his cousin Keith Rawlinson. Their fathers were brothers and had two very big poultry farms in Fowler Lane. During the second world war they had Italian prisoners of war billeted with them. I can remember going there after school and seeing these Italians who were still there after the war was over (1946?). I think they didn't want to go home.

Next is Raymond Coulier, who was a Belgian refugee....he had a younger sister Jenny who remained in Lostock Hall, I think, and an older brother Suey ! (can't remember his real name )

Next in line is Bernard Wrennal from Wrennal's pie shop in Tardy Gate.....he accompanied me to the Preston Catholic College and he was a very clever lad.

I'm next in line Michael Pearson !! and next to me is Brian Littlefair. Brian was a good school friend of mine...we played football together and his mother was a good friend of mine. He lived on Browndge Road near to where Mrs Charnley's shop used to be. He used to work for the Council and drove the Dustbin Wagon around Tardy Gate and Lostock Hall for years !!

Next is Tony Shaw...I think he became a Doctor who emigrated eventually to South Africa.

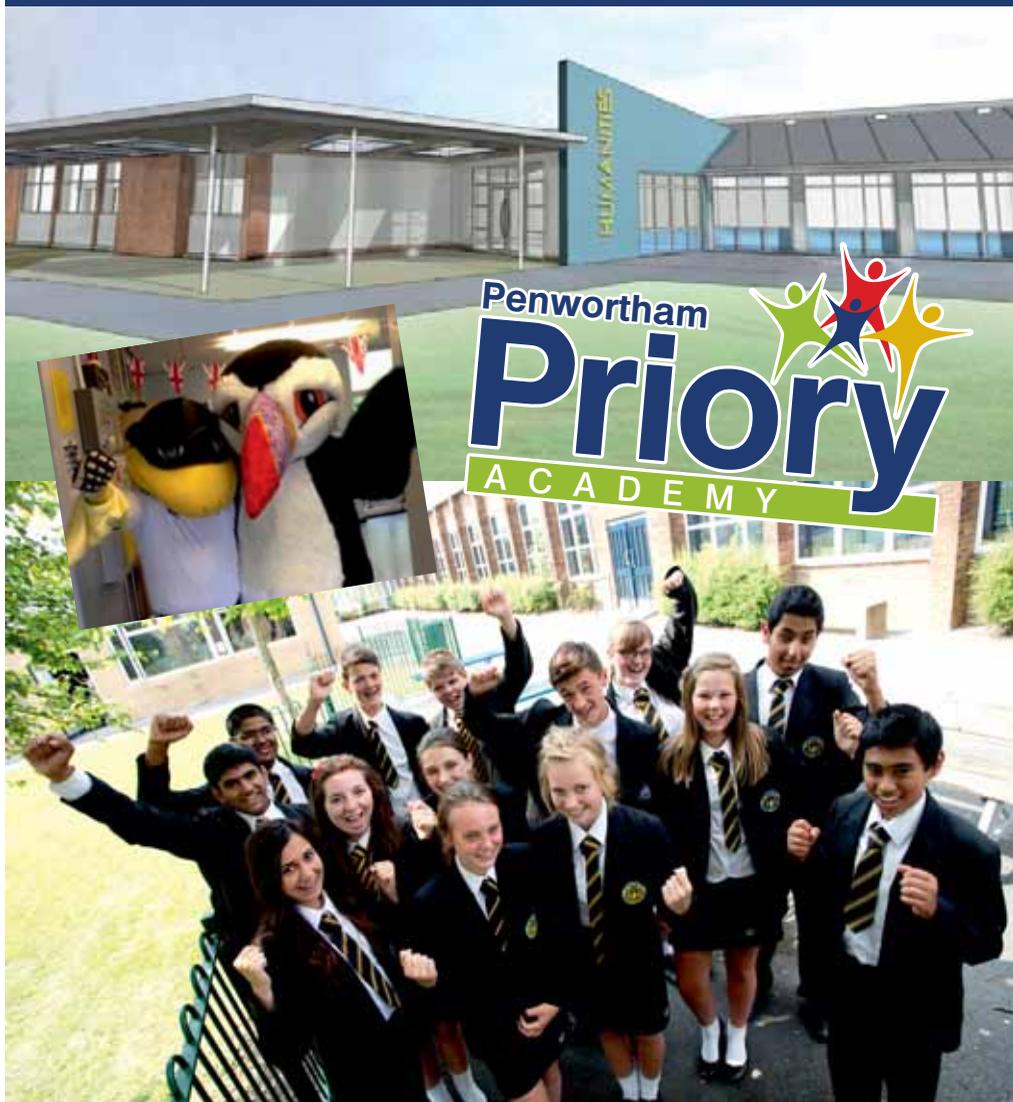
Then Edmund Turner from the motorbike shop and John Wilding another good school friend of mine.

Bobby Anyon comes next a very good footballer who was the Captain of Our Lady and St Gerards team around 1958 (Preston Catholic League) and finally Wilfred Shaw who later became a member of the Hiking group which I belonged to when St Gerards had a Sports Club at the bottom of Lourdes Avenue (1957-58)

Hope this brings back memories !

Michael Pearson

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