

Issue 23

# The Lostock Hall Magazine

Sgt. Richard Morris  
The Domino School  
Tardy Gate Girl

Penwortham

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Welcome to the 23rd issue of The Lostock Hall Magazine. Our magazine is a collection of local history articles, photographs and memories 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 written a new ending to her Tardy Gate Girl memories which we have been including every month since the start of the magazine. I would like to thank Jackie for allowing us to print it. Articles and memories this month by Tony Billington, Jackie Stuart, Annette Pearson (nee Pitcher) and Bill Brierley. A big thankyou to everyone who has sent in photos we will include them in the magazines as soon as we can.

**We are also collecting material for Preston Remembers and the South Ribble Remembrance Archive 1914-1918, which will include anything relating to World War One in our area. A photo, document, a memory, etc.**

If you are able to support us by advertising in our very popular magazine, please do get in touch, without our advertisers we cannot produce the magazine, please support them whenever you can.

If you have any memories you would like to submit to the magazine for publication, please do contact me, or our roving reporter – Tony Billington, especially memories from our older residents, because once the memories are gone they are lost forever. We can call at your home or speak to you on the telephone if you wish us to write down your memories. 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 Hunters (formerly The Welcome Inn, on Hennel Lane.**

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# PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LOSTOCK HALL PAST



**Lostock Hall Carnival 1956.** Courtesy of Mrs Gillian Rimmer (nee Howitt). Seated left to right are Graham Gibson, Glenis Gibson, Gillian Rimmer (nee Howitt) Linda Rutter (nee Howitt) and Andrew Stothert. Standing left to right are Marie Gregson, June Latham, Joycelyn Rostron and Patricia Riley. Unfortunately the name of the 'witch' cannot be recalled. It is thought that they had the loan of a local milkman's pickup. As you can see health and safety was not an issue in those days!



**Carnival Queen early 1950's ?** Avondale Drive, with Lee's house in background and the end of air raid shelter on Council School Field. Is the boy Albert Ball ? Who is the Queen ? 3rd Susan Burgess ?, 4th Mary Neville, 5th Cicely Pitcher. Courtesy of Annette Pearson (nee Pitcher).

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## Sgt Richard Morris

Continuing his series about the men from Lostock Hall who lost their lives in the Great War, Bill Brierley tells the story of Richard Morris, who was killed in Flanders 100 years ago in July 1915.

Richard Morris was born in Lostock Hall in November 1878 and christened at St Paul's, Farington, at the end of that month. His father was George Morris, b. in Hereford in 1853, but who moved to Lancashire sometime in the early 1870s, where he met his wife Margaret Bamber, b. 1856 in Tarleton. They married at St Saviour's in Bamber Bridge in 1878 and lived at 10 Ward Street, Lostock Hall. As well as Richard, their first child, George and Margaret had 5 other children. George had been an agricultural labourer in Hereford, then a railway labourer in Lostock Hall, then in 1891 he registered his occupation as brewer. George died in 1907, his wife two years later.

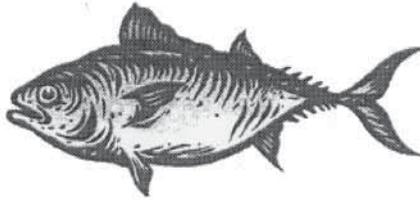
Richard was already a half-timer in the mill in 1891. He is not registered as living at the family home in 1901; the most likely explanation being that he was in the army. However, in 1906 he married Louisa Heyes, b. 1878 in Leyland, and they had two daughters, Lillian b. 1909 and Esther b. 1910. In 1911, the family was living at 17 Ward Street and both parents were working as weavers in the mill. They also had a 67-year old widow, Liza Sherburn, living with them as a domestic which allowed Louisa to continue to work.

At the outbreak of War, Richard joined the 7th Battalion of the King's Royal Rifle Corps which was raised in Winchester in August 1914 then moved to Aldershot. Richard was with the Battalion when they landed in Boulogne on 19 May 1915 at which time he was a sergeant – which is how we know he must have had considerable previous service in the army. By the end of May the Battalion were entrenched near Ypres and had begun to suffer their first casualties. Throughout June, the Battalion were in and out of the trenches and on 1 July they moved to Hooge where the fighting was getting worse. The Battalion's War Diary is unusual: it is still only two months into their war service and each casualty is fully recorded: name, rank and serial number and nature of casualty (killed, wounded, gassed etc) but the appalling events which were about to happen would make accurate record keeping impossible.

On 20 July the British had detonated a large mine near Hooge and had then occupied the village (Hooge means 'high' in Flemish, the village was strategically important as it provided a vantage point over the surrounding area). On 30 July the Germans mounted an attack to recapture the ground lost. For the first time in the history of warfare, they deployed flamethrowers (called 'liquid fire' at the time), with devastating effect. 7KRRRC had just been relieved after several days in the trenches when the Germans launched their attack so they were hastily recalled to the lines. The German attack was ferocious: although few men were actually burned by the flamethrowers the effect on morale was devastating, but most casualties were caused by machine-gun enfilade, hand grenades and bayonettes. The War Diarist attempts to present a full list of all casualties, but prefaces this with: "A correct casualty list is very hard to prepare without details from the Clearing Stations and owing to many being killed and wounded beyond reach." He says during that week the Battalion lost all its officers and about 300 other ranks. Richard Morris was among them. His name is not listed in the War Diary – in fact his body was never found. When the British re-occupied the crater on 9 August, they were able to recover many bodies, but many more were never found. Richard has no grave but is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ypres. He was 36 years old.

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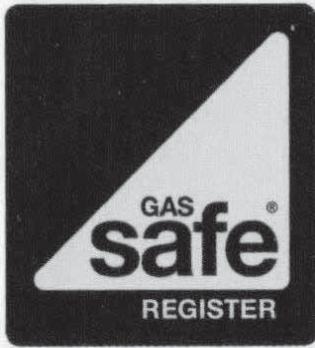
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# PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LOSTOCK HALL PAST

**Pram Race.** Geoff Pearson (mum) and Francis Bajko (baby). Wilkinson Street and Council School Field in the background. Courtesy of Annette Pearson (nee Pitcher).



**Pram Race 1980's.** Pete Tomlinson and the late R. McGarry at the top of Browndedge Road. Courtesy of Pete Tomlinson.



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**Lostock Hall Carnival 1955.** Float passing 'Stopfords' Bakery and Confectioners shop in Ward Street with Birtwistle Street to right of the picture. The shop with the Vimto signs in its window was run by Mrs Gregson. It apparently sold everything (Open All Hours comes to mind) on its wall was a 'Beech-nut' chewing gum machine which gave out an extra packet every fourth penny inserted'. Courtesy of F.Naylor.

# PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LOSTOCK HALL PAST

## **Lostock Hall County Primary School Football Team, summer of 1965.**

Left to right Back row –  
Eric Duckworth, Keith Williams,  
Graham Fazackerley,  
Paul Whiteside, Alan Crabtree,  
Robert Walker, David Dyson.

Front row – Barry Hall,  
David Yates, David Emery,  
Ian Roscoe.

Courtesy of Neil Grimshaw.



**St Gerards School approx 1953. Courtesy of Kath Taylor.**

# PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LOSTOCK HALL PAST

▼ In the early 1920s everyone, and everything, went by train. While changing at Preston Junction, a theatrical group on tour have grabbed the moment for a team photograph.



**Preston Junction 1920.** Taken from 'Along Lost Lines' by Paul Atterbury. Preston Junction changed its name to Todd Lane Junction in 1952 as in numerous occasions passengers alighted thinking they were at Preston and were stranded.

## **1st XI Football Team**

**1965/66.** Walton Le Dale School. On the photograph are 5 boys (see Lostock Dynamoes photo in Issue 15). Namely Back Row - Roy Maddock 4th from the left whilst Billy Deans 1st left, Brent Taberner 3rd from left. Front Row - Jimmy Heaton 3rd left and Billy Livesey in centre on front row with the ball. All boys from Lostock Hall. Photo taken from The Craftsman Magazine, Issue 5, 1966. Courtesy of Frank Pearson.



1st XI FOOTBALL TEAM

# Beginnings...

## by Annette Pearson (nee Pitcher)

I was born Mary Annette Pitcher on 20th February 1948 at 3 Moss Lane, Lostock Hall, Preston ..... weighing in at a tiny 4lbs ... small but perfectly formed .... Our family doctor Dr Cohen in attendance. My Dad was Vincent Joseph Pitcher, a Cloth Looker' at Thomas Moss & Co., and he was the youngest child of a family of nine children from Great Harwood. My mum, Ellen Pitcher (nee Livesey) was a farmers daughter from Withnell the eldest of five children. Mum and Dad married at St Josephs RC Church, Brinscall in 1940 and then relocated to Lostock Hall probably for work for my Dad in the Cotton Mill. I had a sister Cicely who was born 1941 at Chorley Hospital a whopping 10 lbs. My mum's pregnancy with me was one of sickness for nine months and she used to put my Dad's tea on then go down the garden because she could not stand the smell of vegetables. The delivery was quick but she developed thrombosis and it was only the quick thinking of Dr Cohen by not letting her be moved that saved her life. From that day on Dr Cohen was a hero in my mum's eyes and he could do no wrong ... he used to call in on the off chance to see how we were getting on ... imagine a doctor doing that these days !!! Number 3 Moss Lane was a two up two down on half of a cottage which we rented from a Mr and Mrs Sweetmore ... luckily we had a garden at the side of ours. The cottage had been built in the very early 1800's ... very quaint but quite cold and damp, but as the open fire got going at least one room was warm. During the frosty winters we could scrape the ice from the windows ... the inside that is and you only attended the 'lavvy' as a last resort down the yard, not a nice thing to have to do in the dark ... I remember my mum having to accompany us. In 1941 my mum told me that she had a lucky escape from a low flying aircraft which fired several rounds of bullets at her while she was returning home with my sister in her pram. She dashed into the porch for safety and later a bullet was found lodged in the surrounds. We lived next door to Avondale Drive Council School with the railway houses opposite and then the open land between the houses and the railway which was said to house a 'bottomless pit'. Of course several children were attracted to this area as a playground causing parents a lot of distress. My sister frequently used to go off with her fishing net and come back with several 'tiddlers and frogspawn' which were put into a tin bath at the back of our house ... several visits were made to see if any frogs had appeared. The so called 'bottomless pit' has since been filled in and houses built on it !!! Now to the neighbours in the railway houses opposite. The house opposite belonged to Chadwicks and each year you saw them pack up for their holidays in Morecambe ... it was even more fun when they came back because the car was full of gifts they had won at bingo ... they certainly came back with more than they went with !!! The next house had several families in it but the one I remember is Mawdsleys. My sister was really good friends with Ann Mawdsley and she spent more time in their house than ours and many a time she came home with a 'jam butty' which she would not think of having in our house. Miss Ford came next. She was a spinster and my mum and her became good friends over the years. Mr and Mrs Pollard came next ... Mr Pollard worked on the railways and Mrs Pollard was very cantankerous and was always shouting at you for playing in front of her house and making noise. This house was a regular target for the pastime of 'knock a door run' !!! The end house belonged to Watts who had the Post Office and they became good friends of ours. They were followed by the Oneills who arrived from Barrow. Mr Oneill was a signal man and he worked long hours as well as doing odd jobs for people especially my mum ... if anything needed doing my mum would also say go for Mr Oneill ... but the favour was returned because Mrs Oneill was often sending for my mum when one of the child had an accident or they were ill. I remember them always having 'spuds and butter' as their main diet, but it did not seem to them any harm. We became very good friends with the Oneills and the friendship continued for many years till

mum died. My mum became well known as a person you could always go to for help and she helped many families during her life, visitors were always knocking on the cottage door. If anyone needed any help it was a case of 'Go and see Mrs Pitcher'. My mum had many good friends and when my dad died in 1951 aged 41 years she certainly needed them. I was only 3 years old when he died and can remember very little of him but I do remember standing on the gate watching for him to come home from work. My sister was 10 years old and I remember her sleep walking and looking into every corner of the bedroom ... maybe she was looking for my Dad... My mum was left a widow with two children to bring up and no wage earner. The sheds at Thomas Moss & Co had a collection for my dad and presented my mum with £2 16s which was greatly received. Windows pension was a meagre sum but later on when I went to school I was able to get free uniform and free school dinners, so that was a help. My mum became a 'cleaning lady' to enhance her pension and got a job working for Kevills the Solicitors at Todd Hall ... they allowed her to take me with her and I became good friends with their daughter Mary Joyce. We had some good times in Todd Hall ... it was very spooky and the story was told that a passage went from Todd Hall to Brownedge Church where the priests would travel during the times of religious turmoil. She then got a job helping Miss Cornhill, the housekeeper for Father McKenzie ... this again was convenient because the school was just next door. Miss Cornhill and Father McKenzie's little dog Grip was very well known. My mum had some very good friends who helped her over this bad time. Mr and Mrs Hammond, Polly Parr the local milk lady who left us a pint of milk every day for a year and would not be paid for it. Mr Bleasdale the grocer, who slipped some extra goodies into our order every week. Things you do not forget !!! Sunday was the worst day because rations were low and my mum did not get her pension till Monday morning, so Sunday night it was tin bath in front of the fire then early to bed. But no matter what was happening my mum marched my sister and me to eight o'clock mass every Sunday, without breakfast to listen to Fr Gregory Swann chanting for one hour. I was a wishy washy child and fainted nearly every Sunday and had to be escorted to the back porch. This fainting habit stayed with me into my teens and many a time I remember picking myself up off the floor when I had fallen from the church wall. **Continued next month.....**

**First Holy Communion June 19th 1954.** Taken in front of the grotto. Miss Omerod's (who is in the background) class. Courtesy of Annette Pearson (nee Pitcher).



# LOSTOCK HALL AND TARDY GATE

'Welcome to Lostock Hall and Tardy Gate' is the road sign coming from the direction of Penwortham into the villages, this road sign is surely the wrong way round and should read 'Welcome to Tardy Gate and Lostock Hall' after all it is Tardy Gate that you come to first. Tardy Gate is still a place and has been since 1542 when a deed from the Abbey of Evesham bestowed the tenement of 'owres lyeinge in Ffarington to John Tardy.

**Tardy Gate** got its name from the Tardy family. They had a toll gate across Leyland Road, and had a house on the opposite side to the Tardy Gate pub. There used to be a water trough outside the pub, and there was also one where the cenotaph stands now. At the back of the pub there used to be stables, which were probably used for changing the horses around.

Quite a while back I was approached by a local who thought that the pub was haunted by John Tardy. I find that hard to believe, because he didn't live there, but you never know. Also I was informed that Tardy Gate did not exist that I had made the name up. Contrary to this comment, Tardy Gate did exist and still does. In fact, the postal address for St Cuthberts Road, Mercer Road, St Gerrards Road, Lourdes Avenue down to Brownedge Road going towards the pub, then heading down Leyland Road to Gas Works Road, all had Tardy Gate for years. I can't quite remember the year when it was changed to Lostock Hall but something keeps telling me it was in the 1970's.

**Lostock Hall** was given its name in 1212, and it begins whichever way you choose to look at it, at the stone boundary marker at the corner of PD Allen's (Dentist), and continues down Watkin Lane past all the shops, over the bridges and down LOSTOCK LANE to St Catherine's Hospice which was built on the original LOSTOCK HALL. Previously the Hall was a continuation Hospital until 30 years ago when it became a hospice. The Hall originally descended to James de LOSTOCK in 1332 during the reign of Edward II. Over the years the estate was passed down to several other people until 1662 when Andrew Dandie paid a rent for his lands in LOSTOCK HALL. He was also the person who gave his name to Dandy Brook.

**Pieces taken from 'A History of LOSTOCK HALL and TARDY GATE' by me, Jackie Stuart.**

## FARINGTON MOSS

I was interested in reading about Farington Moss in the 21st issue of The LOSTOCK HALL Magazine. I did quite a bit of research on the Moss while I was writing 'The History of LOSTOCK HALL, TARDY GATE and FARINGTON'. When you read about men having to fasten their feet to huge wooden pattens to stop them being sucked down into the bog it makes you appreciate the long and arduous work that they put in. The incentive for all the hard work was the growing market for farm produce. The mossland became noted for produce for the market gardeners in Leyland, Farington, Manchester and Liverpool. When you travel over the bypass and look at the precise pattern of planting of today's vegetables, and the richness of the soil, it really does take you by surprise. It is so beautiful to see. Farington, like many other towns had strong community interests and had a cotton mill built by the mill owners. They also built houses for the workers and started a school. There was also weaving, but agriculture remained the chief occupation until the 1830's when it became a secondary means of occupation. Sadly the mills like most mills have closed down.

**Extracts from 'A History of LOSTOCK HALL and TARDY GATE' by me, Jackie Stuart.**

# PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LOSTOCK HALL PAST



Both photos of St Gerards Church Extension and Tower and congregation at St Gerards were taken on Sunday May 26th, 1963. Opened by the Abbot of Ampleforth, Right Rev. Basil Hume (later Archbishop of Westminster). Courtesy of Cicely Bajko.

# THE GOAL-MACHINE

The following fairy story is a mixture of fact, fiction, imagination and pure unadulterated fantasy! Any resemblance to persons living or dead is bob on !

Once upon a time in the leafy hamlet of Lostock Hall (come on, it really was a nice place once!) lived a young lad with aspirations to being a goal-scoring great in the wake of Dixie Dean, Lawton, Mortensen, Milburn and their ilk. A stone, tin can or other unfortunate inanimate object that stood in his path was launched into orbit by this two-footed legend in the making. His hairline receded earlier than his peers which caused him to look older than his fellow school-mates and teenagers. This was due to the constant heading of anything (stones excluded) into the nearest galaxy by his bullet like skull. Apparently his hair surrendered before it fell out ! He didn't even show any respect to the wet old-fashioned case ball which weighed a ton when kicked or headed. The shimmy, the deft drop of a shoulder and the magical footwork were there for all to see as he chased any imaginary football around the evocative streets of Lostock Hall! He lived, breathed and dreamt football.

How he managed to find time to get 6 'O' levels, 3 'A' levels and degrees in 'club compering' and 'refuse truck driving' remains a mystery to me. In real life, Brian Littlefair was an above average oldfashioned centre forward. He could be seen every Saturday afternoon on pitches in the Preston area hogging the baby-line waiting patiently for the ball to come across to him from either wing. Then with a deft flick of either foot or his shiny cranium the ball was despatched with nonchalant ease into the opposing net. (I did say it was a fairy story) Rumour hath it that when the 'Tiger' comic was being launched many eons ago, word got back to the editors that a goal scoring phenomenon was on the loose in the north of England. After much soul-searching, a hero was born and was to become the main ingredient in the new comic. His name – 'Roy of the Rovers' This sounded more feasible than 'Brian of the Labour Club'! Incidentally, does anyone know that Roy Race (Roy of the Rovers) was and still is the only footballer to have won the World Cup, Champions League, FA Cup, Premier League, Golden Boot and got divorced all in the same season? Brian fell short of this achievement and he is still married! His moment in footballing folklore came in the late 60's playing for Lostock Hall Labour Club in the Preston and District League.

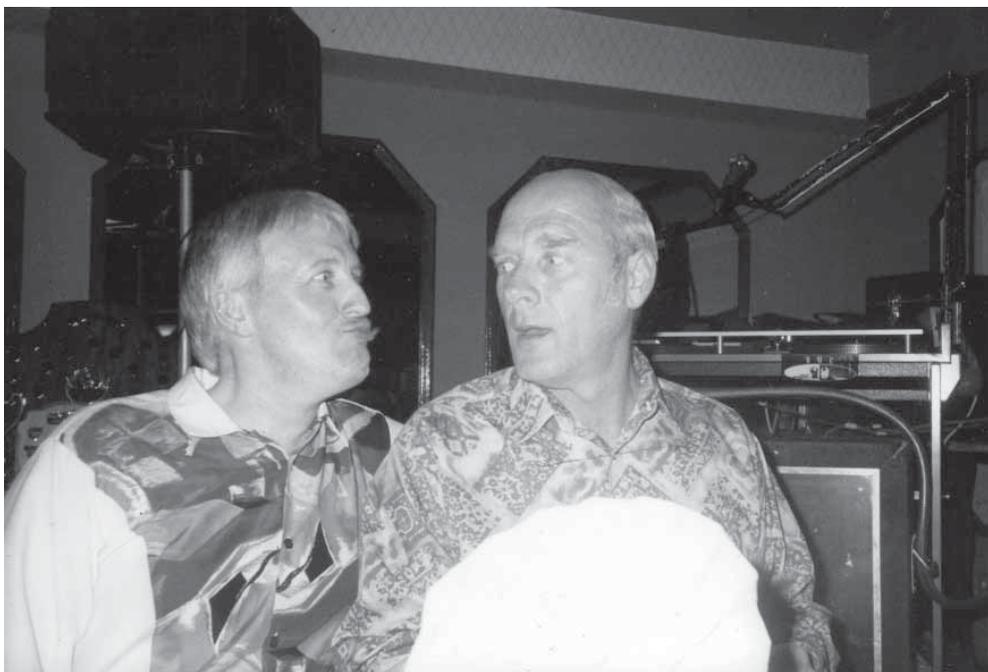
Brian netted 9 goals in one match! That itself wasn't the reason for his claim to fame. What put Brian in the 'annals of history' was that he was promptly dropped for the next game, (which they lost to Brian's delight!) When quizzed recently about this controversial decision the team manager, the late Paddy Lee was to have told the local paparrazi (games room lads in the club!) that he might have scored 9, but he missed 19! Well, like Brian I have a similar tale to tell when I played for Lostock St Gerards in the old Preston and District Catholic league. (At one time you had to be a practising catholic and parishioner to play to your church team). Again in the

60's (mid probably) I played for the Gerards against St Edwards (I think) in about the 3rd game of the season. I played outside left, we won 14-2 and I scored 5! At the weekly team meeting which followed in the Memorial Turner Hall Cloakroom (remember Johnny Flanagan selling ice cream in the same spot at the Tardy Pictures on a Saturday night ?) manager, Mick Airey, announced the team for the following Saturday.

I wasn't in the side, my place went to a lad returning from playing cricket (seasons overlapped) he was available again and he came into the team at my expense despite my five goals in the last match. On my way home I decided that was it and I went the North End on the Saturday. That same night I went up town (Preston) and was having a drink in the Boars Head on Friargate. One of my mates at work (GPO) who had played for St Edwards the previous week shouted 'Yor not laughin now !' I asked him what he was on about. He said 'Yor lot losing 7 – 0 at Longridge St Wilfreds'. I told him I was dropped which he found hard to believe after my performance against him the week before. Call me vindictive but I had a smile on my face all night after that! So like Brian, I was dropped after a scoring spree and the following game both teams lost! This makes the following motto, one you cannot get away from. 'NEVER CHANGE A WINNING TEAM' (especially when it involves a goal-scorer!) I signed for the Labour Club shortly after and played several years alongside Brian. Happy Days

Tony Billington

**Photo Brian Littlefair and Tony Billington**



# THE DOMINO SCHOOL

The two photos which appear in Issues 14 and 17 of this magazine evoke many happy memories (and one a painful one!) Without any disrespect to the present day pubs in Lostock Hall or elsewhere, the 1950's and 60's were a completely different culture than today. Today's 'hostelries' have all the modern technology such as premier league football at the touch of a button, canned music, pool and a variety of other activities unheard of 50 years ago. Going back to the 50's and 60's (I was only born in 1949) so cannot go back any further) the only entertainment on offer was self-made. The 'Vic' (didn't all the other pubs?) had a regular pianist for a good old fashioned sing song at weekends, did he get paid or did the regular pints and gills that adorned the top of his Joanna suffice? Into the pub vault which was a hive of activity. On one side was 'cards' only where a Welsh don or crib school was a regular occurrence. On the other side the 'Domino' school. Down the centre was the dartboard over the huge fireplace. In the winter, there was always a big roaring coal fire to warm you up (and the whole vault). If there was such a definition for a 'domino school'. Here's my interpretation (as a teenager). 'A load of grumpy old blokes in caps (2 versus 2) sat round a table trying every trick in the book (cheating, whoops gamesmanship) to win a gill of ale off each other you would think that the world cup was at stake.!'

Rules: 2 versus 2. Each player picks up 9 dominoes and holds them face down on the table or facing oneself so that opponents cannot see the dominoes. First pair to finish game (get rid of all 9 dominoes) wins. If no one can go, a count-up ensues, one with the least spots win. This is where skulduggery comes in. No one wanted to end up with the double-nine (Titanic – due to 18 spots resembling lights on ship as it went down) so this was sometimes dropped into ones turn-ups on trousers (fashion in the 50s/60s) till after the countup. One player had a bit of explaining to do one evening when on attempting to retrieve the double-nine from his turn-up suddenly realised he was fishing in his opponent's turn-up for it. Following a 'steward's enquiry' the game he had just won was forfeited. Other examples of cheating were thus :-

1. Playing a 'chomper'. This was placing the wrong domino down hoping your opponents would not see it, ie. 8 on to a 9 etc.
2. Remarking out loud an 'innocent' comment such as 'Can you see that one legged sparrow on the roof outside the window' – (means I have several 'ones'). 'Pig Iron' very heavy stuff (fours) Croston Bus (sixes) and so on.

A good team, skill-wise or 'telepathic' could play a full session without buying a drink. If you started a game with the double-nine you would say 'I'm going down wi' Titanic!' Another form of 'gamesmanship' was to kick your partner under the table to relay a message (either I can't go at that end or good domino. Keep playing them) Tactics were often discussed in the snug next to the vault ie. Messages etc. The painful situation I referred to at the beginning of this article occurred one

Sunday lunchtime in the Vic. Partners sat crosswise. The opponent in front of me played his domino at which his partner opposite me kicked my shin thinking it was his mates. His apology wasn't enough to deaden the pain in my leg. (I was wearing steel toe caps so he abandoned that tactic) Dominoes in the Vic could sometimes be an even more painful experience. One character who used to play was Billy Wilding (mentioned in Frank Melling's 'Wilky St' in Issue 20) Billy used to take 'Prince' his 'heeler' Manchester Terrier into the pub with him. 'Prince' would lie next to Billy's feet under the table. God help you (your ankle really) if you moved your feet at all. A quick snap from 'Prince' and you didn't move anything after that ! I think the Vic in the 50s and 60s was a good reflection of good pubs in those days. Cards, dominoes and darts all in full flow in a packed vault. The names chalked up on the small blackboards 'knocking on' to any of these activities reflected their immense popularity. You could wait an hour sometimes. If you weren't bothered what you played, you 'knocked on' all three. The only 'modern' addition in those days was the introduction of juke-boxes'. I'm not saying that everything was hunky-dory, you did get the odd fisticuffs, but usually a bit of shouting or handbags at ten paces sorted out the matter. In today's culture, unfortunately in a lot of cases, other methods are used to sort out such issues resulting in dire consequences and heartache. I know which era I prefer. Happy Days. Great characters. All sadly gone.

**Tony Billington.**



# A TARDY GATE GIRL – THE LAST CHAPTER

Time has moved on considerably since I last wrote something for the Tardy Gate Girl, but I have been asked to write another ending, so here goes.

A lot has happened in the past twelve and a half years, crikey, it doesn't seem that long but it certainly is. My brother, Rowland, did die in St Catherine's Hospice, but I must say there were some laughs as well as tears. The staff will tell you that you are allowed to laugh as well as cry. On one such occasion when me and my eldest nephew, Martin, went to visit my brother, there was an awful smell. My nephew said 'Auntie Jacqueline have you just broken wind?' well, actually it wasn't quite as polite as that, but I had to write it this way. I said 'Martin how can you ask me that'. But that set the ball rolling. We just could not stop laughing. We made our way down to a small room where we could make a drink and wait in there before we could go in and see my brother after the nurses had finished making him comfortable. Inside the room were some more of my nephews and nieces. They all started laughing too when we told them what happened. The next thing the door opened and in walked my youngest nephew, Peter, and my brother's wife, Pat. Peter just said 'Has anybody broken wind?' Again this is the polite way. Well, we just could not control ourselves. Pat said 'You are not allowed to laugh'. I just turned round and said 'Oh yes you are'. Needless to say we had to get out of the small room, so we made our way down to the day room. We could not stop laughing. The laughter though can quite easily turn into tears. When we had calmed down we went back to see my brother. The man in the bed opposite said that my brother has heard us laughing and a smile had come to his face. That was all that mattered.

My sister in law, Pat, died there too nearly two years ago. Also some of my friends have died there. One of them was a school governor. One morning when I went into my office there was a carrier bag on my desk. Inside there was a loaf of bread and two spade handles. I asked the deputy head if anyone had been in my office, she said that the school governor had been in. So I rang him to ask if he had left the bag. At first he said no, then asked me what was in the bag. I said a loaf of bread and fork handles (four candles) as Ronnie Barker would say. This created a load of laughter, especially with the vicar of St James Church who happened to be in the office at the time. He started saying 'Have you any Ows, have you any peas?'. Fork handles (four candles) became a standing joke with me and the governor. When Ronnie Barker died I tried to get in touch with the Governor, but I did not know that he was in St Caths until a neighbour informed me and left me his mobile number. I rang the number and said 'Hello four candles'. The laughter that came was beautiful. He was shouting to someone in the hospice, and said, 'I told you she would ring!'. I went in to see the governor and stood by the door of the day room and said the same thing again to him. This set him off laughing. Some of the staff came to see what was going on and they ended up laughing too. It brings back nice memories.

Another nice memory was the centenary celebration of the Infants School in Avondale Drive in January 2008. I was informed by one of the deputy's just a fortnight before it occurred, that everything was being left to me. With the help of the PTA who obtained loans from the Leyland Museum and photographs, which Leyland Library copied for me, everything worked out alright. The turnout of visitors was brilliant. I had the turn the lights out at a quarter past eight and shout 'Everybody out!'. It was unbelievable. Sadly the school has been closed down now. I do hope that it is not knocked down. It really would make a brilliant sports facility, but we will have to wait and see. I left the school five years ago in June 2009. I was actually in my 32nd year.

Derek and I have celebrated 35 years of marriage, and Jacqueline my youngest daughter has moved into her own home in Leyland. My eldest daughter, Helen, still lives in Houghton, my son, Stuart lives in Nottingham with his family, and my daughter Alison lives in Ashton with her family. Helen has two daughters and a son. Stuart has two sons and a daughter, and Alison has three sons. Helen's eldest daughter, Laura, is a very talented young woman. She very often gets lead roles in pantomimes. I know she is my grand daughter but she is brilliant. Well, since I last wrote the villages have changed again. The Lostock Labour Club is no longer there. The variety of shops have changed again too ..... but that's life ! Well, I think that is about it for now. See You !!!!!

### 'Tardy Gate Girl' (Jackie Stuart)

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**Brownedge Road 1920.** Brookhouse Motors Bus on Brownedge Road, outside what would become Nickson's shop on the corner of Wateringpool Lane.



# PHOTOGRAPHS FROM LOSTOCK HALL PAST



**Queens Silver Jubilee Celebrations 1977.** Marina Grove  
Do you recognise anyone ? Courtesy of Frank Pearson



**St James Field Day 1926.** Procession going along Watkin Lane.  
Courtesy of Kath Taylor



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