

# The Lostock Hall Magazine

Issue 8  
July/August 2013

**Last Day of Steam**

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**Tardy Gate Girl!**

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Welcome to the July/August (8th) 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.

Our thanks to Penwortham Priory Academy who support us by printing and formatting the 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 Ray Cartwright and Brian Whittle have kindly written for us again. I would like any one who would like to contribute their memories of childhood, mill, railway, or about their business, club or group, or any other subjects, or any information and photographs, to please get in touch with me. You can write, email or contact me by phone. Especially older memories which might get lost in time. If anyone would like to write down the memories of their older relations I would really appreciate it. Or contact me and I will be happy to meet with anyone who has memories to share. Thankyou everyone for reading the magazine.

We are able to produce this magazine by the support of the advertisers, who you will find among our pages – please do support them and tell them you saw them in The Lostock Hall magazine. We appreciate their support because without them we would be unable to produce it.

If you would like to support the magazine by placing an advert in our next issue please see the contact details below.

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.

On the Lostock Hall Council School F.C. photo from 1948 were – Back row left to right- Jack Bidwell, Peter Pickering, George White, Roy Randell, Brian Whittle – Middle row – Jack Fidler, Arthur Walker, Brian Carr, Reg Davies, Harold Woods, Front row – Bob Taylor and Derek Park.

## **Congratulations to Mr Harry Wilson who recently received his Artic Star Medal**

Front Cover image by The Lostock Hall Magazine  
Regards, Heather Crook

**Our Contact Details**  
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## Photographs from Lostock Hall Past



**Party on VE Day in Fairfield Street, Lostock Hall 1945  
Courtesy of John McCall**



**Lostock Hall and Tardy Gate Lads at Butlins 1954  
David Tuson, Derek Smith, Bill Parr, Jim Tinsley, John McCall, ?  
McGarry.  
Courtesy of John McCall**

# FRY INN

18 WATKIN LANE LOSTOCK HALL

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**LOSTOCK HALL BOWLING CLUB** - On Saturday last, the members of the Lostock Hall Bowling Club had an enjoyable drive in two of Mr Singleton's wagonettes to Chorley, where they competed for four prizes offered by Mr Ward on the Royal Oak Green.

**Preston Chronicle September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1890**

**LOSTOCK HALL MISSION CHURCH** – Owing to the rapidly increasing population in the district of Lostock Hall, the churchpeople of Bamber Bridge, some seven months ago, conceived the idea of erecting a mission hall at Lostock. With this object in view a successful sale of work was held. Subscriptions were also collected by a specially appointed committee. With the help of several ladies who volunteered their services, a goodly amount of money was obtained. Then came a tea-party on Saturday in a large marquee that was put up in Dr Sharples's field. Upwards of 600 sat down to tea, the Bamber Bridge Brass Band playing selections during its progress. The ladies who presided at the tables were Mesdames Taylor, Sharples, Rawcliffe, Howard, Wilkinson, Bonney, Bimson, Marshall and the Misses Flitcroft, Carter, Prescott, Rimmer and Bretherton. The fine weather that prevailed in the evening was taken advantage of for the purpose of dancing, and other enjoyable pastimes, for which the greensward offered delightful inducements. The number of people quickly increased to upwards of a thousand. Owing to the kindness of Messrs. Etheridge and Clark, contractors for the Farington loop line of railway, the field was handsomely lighted by means of a Wells light. The evening's proceedings were terminated by a brilliant display of fireworks. The following friends subscribed trays for the tea: Rev J Taylor, Dr and Mrs Sharples, Mrs and Miss Flitcroft, Messrs J Butcher, James Parker, Robert Wilson, J Ward, Richard Barnes, Jas. W Turner, Pearson, Pilling, J Sim, T Hebblethwaite, Seed, Lowe, J Iddon, Etheridge, J Fairclough sen, Carter, Durham, Franks, Wm Bretherton, Bimson, J Haworth, Rigby, Ingram, Crompton, John Ashcroft, Hilton; Mesdames – S Ashcroft, Rawcliffe, Jones, Marshall, Wilkinson, Smith, Smalley, Bonny, Bullfied; and Miss Hoyle. Miss Pearson's class provided three trays. On Sunday three services were held in a large marquee. The instrumental and vocal parts of the services were provided the generosity of Mr Richard Smith and Son of Lostock Hall. Each service was very well attended. In the morning the Rev E Goold-Adams MA, curate of Preston Parish Church, preached on mission work; the afternoons service was conducted by the Rev J H Barnett, curate of Chorley Parish Church, and late of Farington; and in the evening the vicar of Bamber Bridge, the Rev J Taylor, was the preacher, the proceedings being augmented by the Bamber Bridge choir. The collections amounted to £18. Altogether £50 has been realised, and the committee are grateful to all friends who have kindly assisted them. Additional help is needed, as the committee are wishful to press forward with the good work which has been so auspiciously augmented. Subscriptions will be thankfully received by the Preston Banking Company, or by any of the committee.

**Preston Chronicle September 27, 1890**

**BAND OF HOPE MEETING** – On Saturday afternoon the Band of Hope Society connected with the United Methodist Free Church, Lostock Hall, held their first monthly meeting in the schoolroom. The chair was occupied by Mr George Hargreaves, of School Lane. Excellent addresses were delivered by Mr Thomas Wignall, Preston, and Mr Cross, Lostock Hall. A number of songs and recitations were admirably rendered, and the proceedings were brought to a close with the farce, 'How to cure a drunken husband'.

**Preston Chronicle October 4, 1890**



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## A FEW MORE MEMORIES

Lostock Lane at the Lostock Hall end, where the roundabout is now, it used to be unlit in the 1940's early 50's. We as lads used to sit on the fence on the corner of Lostock Lane, watching the traffic come down to the 'T' junction with Leyland Road.

On a few occasions cars would come straight down, and in front of them was a very SOLID stone wall, unlit. Behind this wall were two trees, just about the width of the road at the end of Lostock Lane. In the distance were the lights of the railway main line. Guess what, Yes, some of the cars would go straight on heading for the lights. What a shock when they hit the wall, and damaged the front of their cars. And for us, our predictions once more came true. We thought it was funny, but the drivers didn't. Does anyone else remember these incidents. The field belonged to Arthur Ainsworth, who farmed the fields which is now the road from the roundabout to Croston Road.

There was an old woman who lived on her own in Sherdley cottage, opposite Stony Lane. If we were going train naming at Fowler Lane sometimes we would bob in and have a look at her. Her name was Maggie Suggets.

Dick Rawcliffe's farm in Old School Lane, which was opposite Todd Lane South. He had a pit in his field across from the farm. In winter we used to take jam jars with a string for a handle with a lighted candle inside. Then when we were skating on the ice of the frozen pit we would set them all around the perimeter. It was meant to light it up. Supposed to ! The quality of light from the candles left a lot to be desired.

After the war, late forties.

Motor Bike Scrambles early 1950's.

At the bottom of Lostock Lane there was a Stag and Eagle on the big gates, through these you went onto Cuerden Valley. They were held on a Sunday afternoon, a few times a year. One year they had a special scramble. North versus South. A lot of lads came up from the South – they won it.

Stoney Lane School – the building is still there – Any memories ?

Dr Sharples,  
Dardsley House,  
always had a  
chauffeur driven  
car, what was the  
name of the driver  
?

HOW MANY  
BRIDGES ARE  
THERE IN LOSTOCK  
HALL ? Can you  
name them, drop  
us a line.

Brian Whittle



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## RAILWAY EXTENSION

The immense increase of traffic on the North Union Railway, which necessitated the erection of a new station at Preston, and the widening of the railway, and the laying of additional lines from Preston to Leyland, has also made necessary the building of a locomotive railway shed for the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company at **Lostock Hall** about three miles south of Preston. The shed hitherto used at Preston for the cleaning and fitting-up of engines, besides being inconvenient and incommodious, is awkwardly situated, being mid-way between the station and the splendid new hotel built by the railway company and now nearly completed; and the locomotive shed at Lostock only requires the gas and water connections to make it ready for the reception of the plant from Preston. It provides accommodation for 40 engines, and there is space for the storing of 10,000 tons of coal. The building comprises a room containing machinery for turning, drilling, &c., so that repairs may be done on the premises, instead of being sent to Miles Platting, as at present. Abutting on the main line is a coal-stage provided with two overhanging roofs, under which a couple of engines may be coaled and watered simultaneously, as at the top of the stage is a tank containing 90,000 gallons of water. It is intended to make Lostock the terminus for goods trains, which have hitherto run into Preston; and this will cause 100 men of the locomotive department and about 30 brakemen of goods trains to remove from Preston to Lostock.

**Preston Chronicle May 29, 1882**

**NIGHT POACHING** – **Heys Hunt** and **John Hesketh** were charged with night poaching on Farington Moss, on Monday evening last. **John Helme** said he was employed on Monday night last, in company with **Richard and Edward Prescott** with getting up potatoes for Mrs Prescott, their mother, on Farington Moss. About six o'clock he saw the prisoner Hesketh watching the flight of some birds and marking them down, which lead witness and his companions to suspect he was poaching, and induced them to watch. For that purpose they laid down on the edge of a moss-pit, and about half past seven o'clock saw the two prisoners come towards them, each having hold of the end of a net, which they were dragging on the ground. Just before that time, witness heard some partridges calling. Witness jumped up, followed by his companions, and a covey of partridges sprang up and flew away. The prisoners flung down the net, and ran away. Witness ran after prisoner Hunt, and overtook him, upon which he turned round upon witness and struck him with a cart leg he had in his hand, but the blow missed him, in consequence of the witness stumbling and falling. The prisoner recommenced running, but fell up to his waist into a moss-pit, and witness seized him. The net was afterwards found where the prisoners had flung it. Edward Prescott corroborated the evidence of the last witness, as to the use of the net by the prisoners, and further stated that he pursued Hesketh, and overtook him, and that the prisoner attempted to strike him with a cart leg but did not, and surrendered quickly on witness seizing him. The prisoner pleaded guilty to being after the birds, but not to using the cart shafts. – It appeared that both prisoners bore very indifferent characters, having been repeatedly in gaol for various offences, and that the cart shafts used by them as weapons were stolen. The prisoners were committed to three months to hard labour; after which they were called upon to find two sureties of in £5 each for twelve months, not to offend again, and in default to be further committed for six months to hard labour.

**Preston Chronicle October 16, 1858**

## The Last Day of Steam (1968)

1968 was the last year of BR steam; and by the end of June that year, only three sheds remained for the servicing of steam locomotives: Carnforth, Lostock Hall and Rose Grove. People began arriving in Lancashire from all over the country to capture the euphoria of those final days. Lostock Hall had never before seen so many visitors: those who lived far afield and without the means to afford bed and breakfast and long repetitive journeys, slept rough in brake vans and waiting rooms.

Tents sprouted up on waste-land and battered old vans were to be seen parked up on the side of the roads, their bearded occupants messing about with cameras and recorders and cooking tin food on a primus stove. Much has been written of those final months in which the men and the locomotives of Lostock Hall played so great a part. The following provides a detailed account of events which found their place in the annals of British railway history.

The beginning of the end came on Friday, August 2, when Black 5, 44878 became the last steam locomotive to work a section of the Longridge branch, with a trip to Courtalds sidings at Red Scar and back. The driver was Ernie Heyes, who went on to make history the following day. On the evening of Saturday August 3, 1968, unusually clean Black 5, 45212 left Lostock Hall shed for Preston Station.

Crowds were already gathering as the engine cleared the main island platform and reversed into the 'Derby bay' to await the 5.05 pm from Euston. The front portion of this train was for Glasgow and the rear portion for the 8.50 pm to Blackpool South. With the Diesel-hauled front portion out of the way, driver Bob Barker reversed 45212 up to the coaches and his fireman, Mel Rigby, climbed down and coupled up. After signing autographs and posing for the photographers, Bob and his mate got the train underway amid tumultuous cheers, exploding fog signals and an electric storm of flash-bulbs. This was the penultimate steam-hauled passenger train on BR standard gauge metals. While this was going on, another Black 5, 45318 had arrived at Preston from Lostock Hall tender first and was waiting in the bay platform at the south end of the station for the 5.25 pm from Glasgow. When the train arrived, the front portion was uncoupled and taken on its way to Manchester. The rear portion was for the 9.25 pm to Liverpool Exchange, and this service would normally have been allocated to a type 4 English Electric Diesel, but, as in the case of the previous train, and for some unknown reason, such a locomotive was not available that evening.

Driver Ernie Heyes and fireman Tony Smith likewise received the celebrity treatment as they prepared the engine for that final memorable journey along the South Lancashire plain. For the second time that evening a train set off to the accompaniment of loud hurrahs, explosions and dazzling flashbulbs. The carriages were absolutely packed, with standing room only and people were leaning out of the windows exchanging farewells with those on the platforms. As the red tail light disappeared into the twilight, it took some coming to terms with the fact that this was the very last officially scheduled, steam-hauled passenger service train to run on BR standard gauge tracks. It was a sad end of an era which had begun some 140 years ago, just a few miles down the road at Rainhill. Back at Lostock Hall shed, a number of dedicated volunteers were hard at work with buckets of Diesel oil and rags, cleaning up a batch of some 13 steam locomotives in preparation for the following days events: six chartered 'end of steam' specials. The engines took on that 'ex-works' appearance as they gleamed in the lamp light – a sharp contrast to the dark mass of condemned engines on the scrap sidings. Buffer beams and

number plates were carefully repainted and the lining on the cab-sides and tenders was made visible again by rubbing away the shop paint and grime with the serrated edge of a half-crown piece.

While this was going on, 45212 returned to Preston and commenced shunting and steam-heating sleeper carriages. She must have returned to the shed and then gone back to Preston later on the following day, as she was seen and photographed working the 'station shunt' around 3.00 pm on August 4<sup>th</sup>. This made her famous as she had now become the last standard gauge steam loco to work a normal roster for BR. Mercifully she was saved from the breakers yard along with other Lostock Hall Black 5's, 45000, 45305, 45407, 44806 and 45110.

On the morning of August 4, the engines, all looking their Sunday best, left the shed in two's and three's to work the six special trains, which all day ran within the borders of the Manchester and Preston Divisional Areas. The engines involved that day were: 45156, Ayrshire Yeomanry (minus nameplates) on IT80; 45305 on IT85; 48476 working double-headed with Carnforth standard 73069 on the second stage of 1L50; 70013, Oliver Cromwell on stage 3 of 1L50, later to work 1Z74 in tandem with 44781, which was in turn, later to work double-headed with Rose Grove 8F 48773 on stage 2 of the same special and stage 3 being worked by Carnforth engines 45390 and 45025; 44871 and 44894 working together on 1Z78; 44874 working double-headed with 45017 on 1Z79. That same morning, 8F, 48493 left the shed to work a ballast shunt at Farington Junction yard. This was to be the last freight handling as such to be carried out by a Lostock Hall steam locomotive.

The engines began to return to the shed later on in the afternoon. 70013 was late back due to a four hour delay in Manchester, but the last one to return was 45156 with driver Andy Hall, arriving back at the shed at around 4.00 am on the following morning. That was the official end of steam traction at Lostock Hall after some 87 years and the shed was closed as a motive power depot on that day, Monday August 5 1968. Going back to the previous evening, class 8F engine, No 48773, with driver Arnold Hodgson and fireman Jim Walker, arrived at Preston Station around 7.00 pm returning light-engine from Carnforth to Rose Grove. After stopping briefly at platform 9 to drop off the crew of Black 5, 44781, they continued their journey via Todd Lane Junction and Bamber Bridge, and this must have been the last steam locomotive to run the full length of the former 'Preston Extension'. Her arrival heralded the end of an era in East Lancashire, as she was the last engine to have her fire dropped at Rose Grove shed, with Jim Walker doing the honours. Thankfully, the 'big eight' is now preserved, and Jim still reflects on his footplate career and that final day with mixed feelings of pride and melancholy.

The shed master, Harold Sedgebeer retired on August 5<sup>th</sup>, and Freddy Swindles took over under the new title of Depot Manager. Those members of the footplate staff who had not been made redundant were transferred to a signing-on point at Preston, leaving a few members of the maintenance staff at the shed to work on modern traction. It was, however, not entirely the end, for three days later, on Wednesday August 7<sup>th</sup>, Britannia Pacific, No 70013, Oliver Cromwell and Black 5, No 44871 were prepared at Lostock Hall and left the shed in tandem for Carnforth via Lostock Hall Junction, Todd Lane and Butler Street, as part of the preparations for the BR 'Farewell to Steam' 15 Guinea Special, which was scheduled to run on Sunday, August 11<sup>th</sup>.

On the evening of Saturday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, clouds of smoke and steam were visible again at Lostock Hall shed, when 70013 arrived light engine from Carnforth, in readiness for an early start on the outward journey of the following day's special from Manchester Victoria

to Carlisle. Two Black 5's, 45305 and 45110 were prepared at Lostock Hall for the occasion. 45305 was to have taken the special, 1T57, on the first leg of the journey from Liverpool Lime Street to Manchester Victoria, but this duty fell to her stable mate 45110, after it was discovered that the former's brick arch had collapsed in the firebox. There were the last engines to have their fires raised at the shed. Driver, Bill Wilson and fireman, Jim Marlor (both of whom had to stand in at short notice for the booked crew) took the loco to Liverpool tender-first.

At the end of the day, 70013, which had returned light from Carlisle via the Long Drag, called in briefly at Lostock Hall for coal, water and turning before continuing her journey south. She was, in all probability the last steam loco to use the shed's turntable. 45110 with driver Ken Mason and fireman Roger (Dickie) Owen, travelled on the last leg of 1T57 from Manchester to Liverpool Lime Street, then took over and worked light-engine back to Lostock Hall via Edge Hill.

As 45110 left the platform, with a couple of Edge Hill crews on the footplate cadging a lift back to their shed, one of these firemen, fireman Stephen Roberts, on noticing a man on the platform with a microphone in his hand, raised his arms and shouted the immortal words 'No more dirty hands !'

When the engine arrived back on the shed at 12.49 pm., fireman Tom Jones and his mate Jimmy Slater took care of the disposal operation, during the course of which, Tom had to move the engine from the ash pits to road five, and by so doing, in the early hours of Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, he became the last man to drive a steam locomotive at Lostock Hall shed.

Tom (Eric) Jones had been working as a cleaner at the shed around the time that another man with the same name was making an impression in the popular music industry. This became an integral part of an anecdote which runs thus: Tom was working on the night shift when, sometime around midnight, he ran out of fags. There were no shops or pubs open in those days, so he had to nip down to the village where there was a cigarette vending machine outside the Pleasant Retreat pub. Tom had rolled his coppers through the slot and was in the process of opening the magic drawer, when a copper of a different kind rolled up in a van and asked him what he was doing there, messing about with a machine at that ungodly hour.

Tom explained the best he could, then the Policeman asked him his name. The fun started when Tom gave him an honest answer, to which the officer rejoined 'Oh yes ? And my name's Elvis Presley. You'd better come along with me.' He then ran Tom in to Leyland Police Station. Barney Campbell was foreman that night and he'd been looking round the shed for Tom. He had just returned to his office when the phone rang. An authoritative voice at the other end enquired as to whether he had a Tom Jones on his books. When Barny answered in the affirmative, there was an awkward silence, then the crest fallen sergeant explained the situation and added 'Can you send someone over to pick him up ?' Now Barny was normally a very placid and easy-going man and accordingly earned the respect of all those who had the privilege on working with him, but on this occasion he went ballistic: 'Now look here' he shouted, 'you took him away you can bloody well bring him back: and be sharp about it, as I've got a job for him to do !'

They were happy days while they lasted.

**Taken from The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway around Preston by Bob Gregson  
ISBN 9780956518453 Available at Waterstones in Preston.**

Anyone with memories of the last day of steam at Lostock Hall – please get in touch !

**A reunion of Lancashire railwaymen  
will take place at the Leyland & Farington  
Social Club, Leyland,  
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to commemorate the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end  
of steam traction on British Railways.**

Men from Lostock Hall, Rose Grove, Carnforth, Accrington, Lower Darwen, Bolton and Preston engine sheds, will all be welcome.

Admission fee will cover cost of room and buffet, and will be around £3.50 per head, according to the number attending, which has to be ascertained before August.

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## Ray Cartwright's Reminiscences

When I here the local 'youth' complaining they have nothing to do, I am as guilty as anyone in dismissing their claims its only as I am doing this article it seems they might just have a case.

When I was a lad fortune smiled on me living just across from the Tardy 'wreck', although it didn't seem that way at the time. The 'Recreation Ground' was taken for granted as it probably is now. It consisted of things a largish-grassed play area, two roundabouts, swinging-horse, American planks, two sets of swings and a toilet block. The adventure side of things started with the Air – raid shelters, we had three in our vicinity, two above ground and one large underground. The above ground shelters which were for the protection from shrapnel injuries were situated near the Croston Road entrance to the 'wreck' between Southport Terrace and the Stone Row, the other one was on the super dirt we all knew as the 'Big Backs' it was an area at the bottom of Meadow Street and Parker Street, between a row of three storey houses, now all demolished, along with Southport Terrace, to make way for the car park. It's a pity the car park couldn't be renamed 'The Big Backs Car Park' with all the happy memories that flood back when thinking about it. The endless games of duck stones, hopscotch, tig, hide and seek, relievio, marbles, kickball and hide. I could go on and on all the games were such fun. This area was also the 'Bonfire Night' centre of attraction, this of course, was after the war.

The infamous underground shelter was for protection from more serious air raids. I say infamous because of two incidents in the forties where two people died in there. I will try and say more about this in a further article and just concentrate now on Happy Days. I suppose one of the most eventful happenings on the big backs was when the late Ken Westwood discovered an abandoned baby boy; the mother was never found, I believe a porter from P.R.I. adopted the baby. I wonder where he might be now ?

Ken was a knocker up for the railway at this time.

On to my next adventure playground, this was the old disused brick croft now covered by the Rushy Hey estate, it was just a marshy wilderness, with a large water filled pit, surrounded by bulrushes, (hence the word rushy in Rushy Hey) and a wooden table in the centre of it used as a King of the Castle platform. It was always an adventure to get onto it, many is the time I have had to go home to dry out after failing to walk the plank. I cannot remember one instance of anyone saying you cant do this or do that whenever we were having fun in these adventure play areas. Leaving the brick croft behind and briefly crossing Croston Road; there was a barn at the side of the Anchor pub, which for a big part of the year was full of bales of straw, this again was a play area, we used to rearrange the bales to make a warren of passages, no one ever seemed to bother us, we just had to watch out for the landlord of the Anchor.

Just over Farington Railway Station bridge, on the right hand side we have Kellett Acre, it was known to us then as Ridings orchard, for a big part of the forties, this

was abandoned due to the bungalow that the Riding family lived in receiving an almost direct hit from a bomb. I cant just remember what happened to the family but I believe there were no fatalities. Again it was a smashing playground and the apples were very good. The last area of adventure and can still be, because a big part of it is still there, was along School Lane, past the debris of Ridings to a series of lodges 'a favourite blackberry picking site'. At the time there were four of them, now due to a small housing estate being built on what we called the small lodge, its now down to three. I am not sure what the state of the lodge behind Farington Endowed School is like now, I do know it has been closed off, but we never had this restriction put on us. We used to go there in the morning, spend all day there, then reluctantly go home just before nightfall. It was always too scary to go past St Paul's graveyard after dark ! The other two lodges still there are open to the public and makes for a lovely country walk from Church Lane to Lodge Lane at any time of year. When I walk it the nostalgia that comes flooding back is tremendous and helps in trying to remember the location of the old pump houses that were formerly used for replenishing the water on the steam locomotives which used to ply their trade on the line above.

Oh, Happy Days.

**T.T.F.N. Ray Cartwright**



The Watson Family – A family of ten with ten years between them - a well known family from Wateringpool Lane Lostock Hall. Bernard was a well known builder. Former navigator during the last war and was also a shot down prisoner of war. A boxer who fought and lost against Freddy Mills in Preston Public Hall. Scout Master who built many of the estates around the district. Another brother is Tom, well know for his work as a groundsman and a former player with over 50 years service for St Gerards F.C. Also Austin a local building contractor based at New Longton.

Photo and info Courtesy of Ray Cartwright

# LOSTOCK HALL AND PRESTON NORTH END FOOTBALL CLUBS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE PRESTON CHRONICLE

SIR, The committee of the Lostock Hall Football Club, particularly desire space in your issue for the insertion of a copy of a post card received by their secretary, from the secretary of Preston North End Football Club, in answer to a letter seeking for arrangement of two football matches for the ensuing season; also a copy of a letter sent to the North End secretary in reply to his post card. They consider such remarks do not rest with in their application at Lostock Hall, but may be sufficient for other respectable clubs, in Preston, who venture to go as far as Lostock Hall have gone, and those clubs whose names figure high in the Football Arena may not feel overjoyed when they see with whom they are associated; and out of respect for these they think it only right to publish the following, with your kind permission.

Lostock Hall, near Preston.

(COPY OF POST CARD)

32 Milner-street, Preston.

Dear Sir, - I don't think our card would look well if we had your name amongst the fixtures besides those of Blackburn Rovers, Darwen, Accrington, Sheffield Heeley, Walsall Swifts, Wednesbury Old Athletic, &c., &c. The Preston Swifts and Rovers are glad to be able to arrange with our 2<sup>nd</sup> team. Could you team come over on Wednesday evening next, 7 o'clock to play our A team a practice match, the gate to be divided after paying printing costs. Please reply early as I want to get placards out.

Yours truly,  
Sec.

B. Robinson, Hon.

(COPY OF LETTER TO THE SECRETARY NORTH END F.C.)

Dear Sir, The promptitude with which my note of Thursday last, met its response, I am sure reflects great credit upon you, as the secretary of that invincible and celebrated club, known as the North End Football Club, who, though possessed of unspeakable honours, are always sufficiently humiliating in condescension to meet their opponents however inferior they may be in skill on the football turf. Secondly, notwithstanding the shortness of your remarks, they certainly contain all the pathos that is possible to be given. Lastly, but not least of its attributes, is the courtesy of expression and article used to convey the information of our insignificance and the cloud our name would cast upon your card, and upon the name of many respectable and noteworthy clubs that it is intended to contain. I am unable to exhibit, in words, the deep sense of gratitude with which your remarks have filled the breast of our committee. The Post Office official, also, who had had the honour to carry the half-penny document from a society so noble and generous, must have felt an elevation of dignity in being an inhabitant of the

same locality where such men hang out. Your committee must be men of lofty intellect, judicious in their procedure, and considerate in their expression of feeling towards their fellowmen, or they would not have occupied so long a time in the consideration of an application of a club so obscure as the Lostock Hall Football Club. I am pleased that you have given me the names of some few or your engagements, as they afford me a little foundation to build upon. First allow me to ask which of them are possessed of the same vain conceitedness as the North End team ? I say not one, and yet the majority might have refused your team on a much broader line of superiority than you hold against the North End team, and which will, doubtless, shew itself before this time next year. Again, which of them would have the audacity to reply to a challenge from you in the tone you have replied to us, had they suffered a defeat of six goals to nil at your hands the very last time they met you ? I repeat, not one, but on the other hand, would have been glad to prove for themselves what you either justly or unjustly claim for your selves against Lostock Hall Football Club. Under any circumstances, the least they would have done would have been to reserve such sarcastic remarks as you have thrown out. Allow me to remind you that we far from expected a victory, in case of an encounter with you. We are not absolutely blind to the rapid improvements made by your team of late, and, therefore, could not for one moment conceive an approach to what we should meet with; but you had another object in view. However, your ambition carries you higher in meeting the Blackburn Rovers than ours does in meeting you, people with such out of place notions as you hold, can find cheek enough to fill any space. I see no reason that Lostock Hall team should be despised by you any more than another. They have, on two occasions, met you honourable, and played an honest game, and in speaking of their ability, there is more praise due to them than the fanciful North End team. They have persevered and merited what little they know, and had they been fortunate enough in pecuniary matters to enable them to employ teachers and maintain such, I hold that they would have been nothing short of the North End team to-day. What were you before you got these men ? And what where you without them ? Entirely unfit to be named against the meanest team of those mentioned in your P.C. You speak that your card would not look well with our name on it. Pray what will yours appear on the card of Blackburn Rovers and others ? *Simply Ridiculous*. Lostock Hall may have in its team, individuals quite as well or even better skilled in the game than the North End can boast of; but they are not so rank with them. They are not cuffed and collared, hairoiled and scented; every day; consequently they are nobody. Still, when they have applied for engagements to your superiors, and been refused, it has been in tones of respect, as shown by the enclosed, and, if with other motives, they have had the common sense to reserve such, and thereby retain their good name.

YOURS &c.,

THE SECRETARY.

P.S. Unless I receive a reply from you, rejecting our application in milder terms, I shall be tempted to publish the contents of your P.C. with this reply.

**Preston Chronicle September 8, 1883**

## A Tardy Gate Girl (8)

The Head Mistress of the Infants Department was Miss Smith. She was keen on music, so we all had to learn to play a percussion instrument. Sometimes we would not have enough instruments to go around, then we would have a stick to bang on the floor. We had to be in time with the music, otherwise the stick would be taken away. I was allowed to play the castanets and tambourine once. I must have made a bad job of it though because I ended up with a triangle. Each year the Infant Department's 6/7 year olds would go to the public hall in Preston for the Schools Music Festival. It was a huge festival with schools from across the county sending choirs and bands.

The year that we went we had to learn to play the Yeomen of England (I am not sure if this is the correct title). I must have driven my mum, dad and brother mad at home, because all I could do to practice was sing the notes, TA, TATI, TA, TA over and over again, then something came flying across the room at me to stop. The second tune we had to learn was Tchaikovsky's Nut Cracker Suite. My friend Enid could never say it properly so she used to call it, Jack Austin's Sweet Nut Cracker. Enid's surname was Whewell (pronounced Weewell). After many years of this pronunciation her mother and presumably her dad, decided to pronounce their name as 'Huwell'. Mrs Whewell informed my mum and Mrs Rimmer of the change. Mrs Rimmer wasn't having it and said 'From now on I'll call you Mrs Pisswell then' and stormed off in a huff. Enid was always late for everything, so it was no surprise that she arrived late for the music festival. Her mother was still sewing her buttons on the back of her white dress as we were about to go on stage. We played the two tunes we had learned very well. Our parents were clapping and crying at the same time. When you are doing your TA, TATI, TA, TA's you don't fully understand or hear the full effect that it has. It is only when you stop to consider the pieces being played on the percussion instruments, by 6/7 year olds, that you realise the full extent of the achievement. Besides music we had to learn English, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Religious Education and Physical Education. In Religious Education we were taught how to say 'The Lord's Prayer'. This caused some conflict between me and my mother. She would insist that I had got the words wrong and that it should say Thy Kingdom Come. I disagreed with her, the words were Thy King and Kong. I just knew she was wrong, because the teachers said it. Well I believed they did. My nephew Martin had a similar problem, only this time it was between him and me. He said to me 'There's liver you know' I asked him where ? He replied 'Diz liver us from evil'. He truly believed that he was right. I wonder where he got that from? We were also taught how to sing hymns. I remember learning to sing All things Bright and Beautiful, while watching a bird fluttering around a small cistern mounted high up on the wall inside the small hall. I used to think that the hymn was especially for that bird. I wasn't a particularly bright child. At that time girls were not expected to do well anyway. There was very little chance or a decent job then, so educating girls didn't matter much. We were only expected to go into the mills or factories. My brother was very clever and went to Hutton Grammar School I grew up in his shadow, so nobody paid a great deal of attention to me. I was much happier playing football or cricket. There were times when my brother would fire arithmetic questions at me. I would stand there like a gibbering idiot and say anything that came into my head. It was always the wrong answer, so I grew up feeling totally inadequate and inferior. I just plodded on quite happily in my own little world.

When we went into the Junior side of the school, Geography and History were added to the subjects we had to learn as well as Sewing for the girls and Drawing for the boys. The Physical Education lessons concentrated more on the annual sports day races. I was quite

good at running and usually took part in all the races. I remember one such event when my dad was there watching. I was the last runner in the relay race and overtook the other girls to win. My dad was really impressed and said to my mum that he didn't know I could run like that. My dad was a brilliant runner in his youth, until he was given money as a prize for winning a race. Because of this he was considered to be a professional and was not able to run again. As time went by and we grew a little older strange things were being whispered in the school yard. 'Do you know about it ?' was the question being asked. Of course I answered yes. I had no idea what 'It' was, but I couldn't appear ignorant could I ? Well 'It' turned out to be menstruation (monthlys or periods). I still didn't know what was being said, but I could not admit it. I would never have learnt anything if I had. We didn't have sex education at school then, we certainly didn't at home. It was about this time when one of the girls in my class did start to menstruate. We were in class and Mr Davies, our English teacher, asked if anyone knew about it. I held my hand up and said I did. I was asked to walk the girl home. All the way I kept thinking that she must have cut her leg very badly, because her skirt was covered in blood. When we arrived at her house her mother was breastfeeding her baby brother. I just stood there, mouth wide open, wondering what on earth she was doing. WOW! I was in a complete daze by the time I got back to school, and I certainly did not understand what was going on. As time went by the strange furtive whisperings began to make some kind of sense, although they were still very furtive. I started to develop physically which didn't bother me overmuch until I had to have a school medical. We all had to strip off to our knickers or underpants as the case may be. When it was my turn to see the doctor she shouted out very loudly 'HOW OLD IS THIS GIRL ?' One of the nurses told her I was 11 years old. The doctor replied 'BUT SHE IS BIG ENOUGH TO BE 13'. I was so embarrassed. I could have crawled through a hole in the floor. I could not get into my clothes quick enough, as I was fumbling and shaking so much. One of the nurses who could see my embarrassment came to help me dress. This resulted in my being self conscious. It was in the same year that we were allowed to have swimming lessons at Saul Street Baths in Preston. This was unusual then, because normally you had to be 12. On the very first lesson we were all shoved in at the deep end. What a scary experience that was. The sides of the baths were quite high above us and the top curved inwards so you could not climb out. I thought that I was going to drown, it seemed to take such a long time to surface. It did put some of my friends off swimming, but I persevered and did eventually learn, although I did not like deep water. The following year the girls started Housecraft lessons with Miss Haycraft, and the boys started woodwork with Mr Cairns. Children came in from St Gerrards and schools in Bamber Bridge for these lessons. Miss Haycraft was very Victorian in her ways. I think she was training us to work in big houses or hotels, it certainly was not for more modern times. We were taught how to scrub a table the way the grain goes, polish silver, (which none of us had), blacklead the fire places and wash socks and hankies. We didn't have soap powder to make suds to do the washing. We had a small metal basket with some hard soap inside. We had to shake the basket in the water to get some suds. When it came to ironing there was a problem as there was only one electric iron. Most of us had to use the flat irons from the top of the boiler. In the cookery lessons we were taught how to make cocoa, toast, rice pudding and stew. Apart from the toast and cocoa, nothing was ever cooked properly so it went into the bin when we got home.

Continued next month .....

Jackie Stuart.

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