

The Lostock Hall Magazine

Issue 9
September 2013

Tardy Gate Centenarian
Lostock Hall Memories
Farington Tannery

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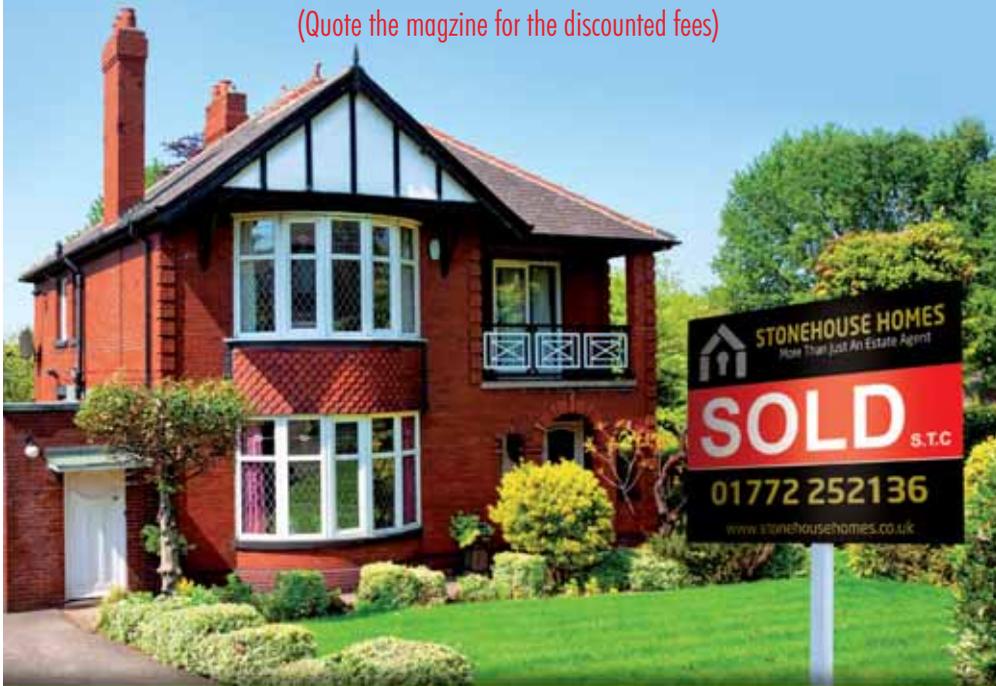
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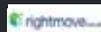
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Welcome to the September (10th) issue of The Lostock Hall Magazine, which also covers Tardy Gate and nearby parts of Farington. It is a collection of local history articles relating to the area.

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 we are very lucky to have in our midst Mrs Connie Sumner, who on the 14th of August attained the grand age of 100 years – we all wish her very many happy birthday greetings, read about Mrs Sumner's memories on the middle pages. We have memories of Lostock Hall Methodist written by Mrs Margaret Heyes, and also memories of growing up in Lostock Hall by Mrs Pat Robinson. Bob and Beryl Ainsworth have kindly loaned us photos. 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 amongst 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.

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PRESTON ARTS FESTIVAL –The 12th Annual Preston Arts Festival takes place 20th – 29th September www.prestonarts.com

Front Cover image – St Paul's Church, Farington - by The Lostock Hall Magazine
Regards, Heather Crook

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Photos from Lostock Hall Past



Jack Bidwell, Harry Hunt, Robert Ainsworth and Hughie Richardson, three in National Service uniforms, taken from Woodcock Hall Farm with the Crow Trees cottages in the background. 1953. Courtesy of Bob and Beryl Ainsworth.



**Woodcock Hall Farm c.1954. Harvest Time.
Courtesy of Bob and Beryl Ainsworth**

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Articles from the Past

Killed at a Level Crossing - A little girl named **Ellen Rigby** was returning home from school at Farington near Preston on Monday afternoon with two school fellows, when she met with instant death. On passing over the level-crossing she stopped to pick up a marble, when an express train from Preston dashed up and killed her on the spot.
The Lancaster Gazette, Feb 22 1890

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.

School Lane School – Mr J Rennick who has been the headmaster at the School Lane School for about five years is about to leave that place. He has received an appointment at Messrs. Bashall's School, Farington, where he succeeds **Mr Paine**, who recently met his death accidentally at Ingleton. Mr Rennick had made a great circle of friends in this district, and is greatly respected and esteemed among the School-lane people, who are exceedingly sorry to lose him. A successor has this week been fixed upon in **Mr Heaton**, who although coming from Preston, is a native of Newbury, in Berkshire.

Preston Chronicle, Sep 6 1890

Field Days – The annual field day given to the children attending the Catholic schools at Brownedge and Tardy Gate took place on Saturday. The Brownedge scholars assembled at the school and headed by the Bamber Bridge and Higher Walton Brass Bands proceeded to Tardy Gate. Here the combined procession met and paraded the village accompanied by **Father Fishwick** and Messrs. **McMellon, Woodruff** and **Moxham**. Subsequently they adjourned to a field on the farm of **Mr Wilson**, where various games were indulged in. Unfortunately, however, rain began to fall in the evening and considerably marred the enjoyment.

Preston Chronicle July 9th 1892

Brutal Attack on Gamekeeper – Last weekend when a gamekeeper named **John Roskell**, in the employ of **Mr John Eccles, Farington House**, was returning from Tardy Gate to his home he was set upon by four men who kicked him and otherwise severely assaulted him. He had to be removed home where he still lies in a serious condition.

Preston Chronicle August 13th 1892

Football – On Saturday afternoon last, the Leyland team defeated Lostock Hall in the Preston and District League Competition by three goals to one. On the same day **Farington North End** played a drawn game with **Farington St Paul's**, the result being one goal each.

Preston Chronicle Dec 3rd 1892

Agricultural Lecture at Lostock Hall – On Wednesday evening a lecture was delivered in the **Lostock Hall Mission Hall** by Mr **W P Roberts**, on the treatment of vegetable and market garden. **Dr Sharples** occupied the chair, and there was a good attendance. Mr Roberts will again be at Lostock Hall and Bamber Bridge very soon, and will deliver two lectures in each centre of the Local Board district.

Preston Chronicle Dec 3rd 1892

FRY INN

18 WATKIN LANE LOSTOCK HALL

HOURS OF OPENING

	<u>LUNCH</u>	<u>TEA/SUPPER</u>
Monday	CLOSED	CLOSED
Tuesday	11.30am – 1.45pm	4.30pm – 9.30pm
Wednesday	11.30am – 1.45pm	4.30pm – 9.30pm
Thursday	11.30am – 1.45pm	4.30pm – 9.30pm
Friday	11.30am – 1.45pm	4.30pm – 9.30pm
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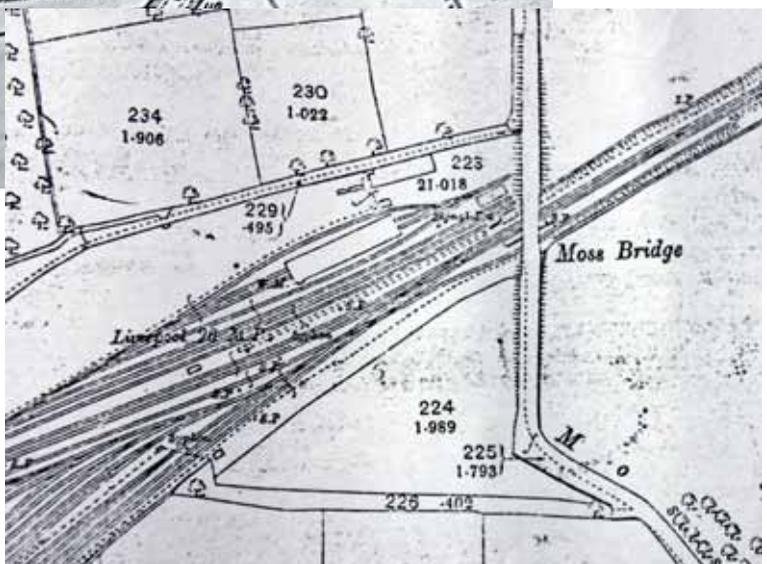
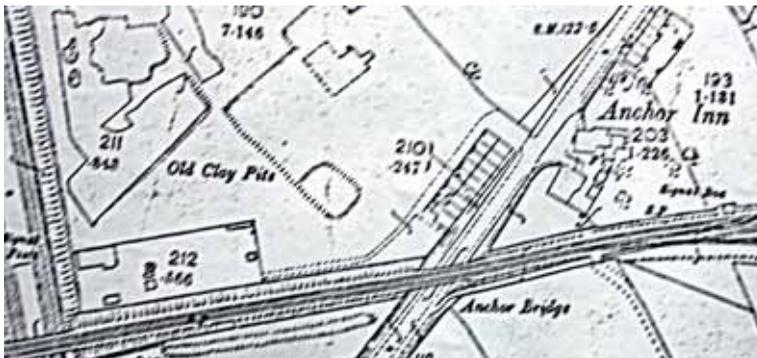
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The Bridges of Lostock Hall

1. Down Wateringpool Lane, where the Gas Works are.
2. Todd Lane North, Preston Junction Bridge (where the station was)
3. Red Bridge (Brownedge Road)
4. Moss Bridge, Todd Lane South
5. Dandy Bridge, Todd Lane South
6. Left in Lostock Lane over the road in St Catherine's Hospice
7. Resolution Bridge
8. Railway Bridge 1 (double bridges)
9. Railway Bridge 2 (double bridges)
10. Anchor Bridge, Croston Road
11. 1st Railway Bridge in Coot Lane
12. Railway Bridge – bypass bridge
13. Between Lostock Hall Roundabout and Croston Road – new Railway bridge
14. Iron Steps – bottom of Ward Street over railway lines going to Croston Road
15. Sherdley Road bridge – over the road

Are there any more – let us know – Brian Whittle





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Farington Tannery

Farington Tannery was on the site of Lonsdale Chase.

The Lonsdale family bought the tannery as a going concern in 1870. (Moving from a tannery at Dinkley).

In 1990 the then present **William Lonsdale** was born at OAKVILLE, Croston Road in 1919, in 1990 he lived at Mawdsley.

He recalled his grandfather, William Lonsdale and his father, Cecil William, at the tannery treating the raw hide by submerging the hide for 14 months in tanks of ground up oak bark fermented in water. The hide was then used for horse harnesses and for clog leather.

William Lonsdale demolished an old house around 1884 and built Beechwood the large house once owned by **Doctor Gosh**, now the Medicare Unit Surgery. In September 1885 Mr N Lonsdale, The Tannery, Farington was elected Secretary of **The Farington Football Club** at the Clubhouse, Tardy Gate Inn.

In 1942 the tannery was sold to **Mr Alf Newsham** who produced animal food, and for this period it was remembered by an offensive aroma.

The Lonsdale's family grave is marked by the very tall stone on the right as you approach St Paul's church entrance.

On the 11th of December 1894 **Mary Ann Preston** aged 25 was buried at St Paul's Church, Farington and she lived in the Tannery Cottages. On 20th August 1895, **Frederick Charles Lonsdale** aged three was buried in St Paul's abode given as Tannery Cottages. On 12th December 1899 **Ada Parker** aged 10 months buried at St Pauls of Tanners Row. Information from Lancashire Online Parish Clerk Project.

OATS AT TANNERY FARM, FARINGTON SALE OF MANGOLD WURTZLE AND WHEAT TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION BY MR S PARKER

On Monday November 2nd 1857, at one o'clock in the afternoon.

A quantity of FARM PRODUCE consisting of about four statute acres of excellent mangold wurtzel, now growing on lands at the Tannery Farm, near Tardy Gate, in the township of Farington, likewise about 40 thraves of excellent wheat, and 30 thraves of oats, the whole of which will be sold in lots to suit the purchasers.

Farington, October 22nd, 1857

TANNERY IN FARINGTON

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Connie Sumner (100)

One of our oldest residents, who is very sprightly, Mrs Connie Sumner was 100 years old on August 14th and has lived in Tardy Gate all her life. Connie and her husband Charlie had three daughters, Connie (78) Jaqueline (69) and Gillian (66), seven grandchildren and ten great grandchildren, some who live in America and Australia. Connie's parents were Emma and Arthur Finch, who were landlord and landlady of the Tardy Gate Inn, taking over from Arthur's parents William and Mary Finch. Connie had two younger sisters, Rene and Norah. Born in 1913 during the first few weeks of her life Connie lived at her grandparents (Richard and Hannah Bowling) house in Coote Lane. Richard was an engine driver. Hannah, her grandma, only had one arm, when she was nine she fell over in the playground and gangrene set in. She remembered having it amputated just below her left shoulder, on a kitchen table in a public house at Walton. She heard her arm drop into a bucket of lime. It did not stop her being able to do anything, she could bake, cook and sew.

Connie told us that Fred Brown drove Dr Sharples. Mr and Mrs Brown had a grocers shop at that time on Watkin Lane, opposite The Victoria Hotel (now a hairdressers). Eventually they moved into a bungalow on what had been Dr Sharples land, next to Dardsley House on Brownedge Road.

Connie lived in the 'Tardy Gate Inn' until age 11½ (1913 – early 1925) when there were 48 shops in Tardy Gate/Lostock Hall, including a clogmaker over both bridges, and several shoe and shoe repair shops (cobblers) – because in those days people walked and wore out shoes !! Good variety of shops – butchers, newsagents & toffees, greengrocers, confectioners, grocers, hardware/bicycles/tools (Balls).

There were stables at the rear of the Tardy Gate Inn, and a Blacksmith on Watkin Lane (where they built the flats, opposite the war memorial near the Pleasant Retreat eventually)

Edward VIII, Prince of Wales came through Tardy Gate going from Preston to Leyland (approx. 1922) All the children had to go home and change into their 'best clothes' at lunchtime. They were all given flags and students from all three Lostock Hall schools gathered at the memorial at the Pleasant Retreat. When his car was within sight they had to wave their flags and sing 'God Bless the Prince of Wales'.

Relating to Issue 4 Lostock Hall magazine – Harry Wilde and Clifford Slater were 2 boys (there could have been 6) who painted the plan of the village. It was there in 1927 when Mrs Sumner (age 14) left school. The boys were sometimes allowed out of class to get information or to paint in the afternoons. It was painted on the wall.

When Connie attended Lostock Hall Council School Miss Maddock was the headmistress of the Infants and the top infants teacher. Miss Franks was the nursery teacher and then it was Miss Schofield's class. In the big school the teachers were Miss Hurst, Miss Rounds, Miss Wilde, Miss Spedwell, Miss Robinson took 5/6 and Mr Lund. Connie and friends had to warm his dinner up for him upstairs, it was always a lamb chop, then rushed home, ate their dinners quickly to rush back to wash up. Connie thought it was great to do that. On her way home from school they would often watch them shoeing horses at the blacksmiths. When she was 11 Connie went to live at her grandparents house in Coote Lane.

Connie worked at Moss's Mill from August 1927 until August 1934. Thomas Moss owned the mill, she worked at the one over the bridges on Ward Street, she was a weaver. She hated working there, the noise, the humidity, the damp floors etc., and was happy to be able to leave just before she got married. The hours were 7.30 am to 5.30pm with 1 hour lunch break. She worked 2 'special beams' (more expensive cloth) sometimes

working 2 narrow beams (special) and 2 broad beams. She earned approx. £3 a week. Connie remembers that the Victoria Hotel was a lot more forward than it is now, there was only a small footpath between it and the road. It was rebuilt and set further back.

Connie was a very good at sewing. She remembers walking to Bamber Bridge with her grandma Hannah to see a lady at Bamber Bridge, who used to make Hannah's cloaks. The lady took them upstairs to one of her bedrooms she used as a workshop, which had a counter all the way round. Connie watched as she cut out the material and thought I could do that. When she was 19, her husband-to-be Charlie, bought her a Singer Sewing Machine, which she says was a nice piece of furniture. Over the years she made 8 brides gowns, 21 bridesmaids dresses, as well as evening dresses, ordinary dresses and many costumes for pantomimes. When the family of three girls went on holiday to the Isle of Man they took a trunk of dresses with them.

Connie has attended St James Church for 97 years, since she was three years of age. At first she was in the Sunday School, then Bible Class at 16, became a Sunday School teacher at 18 until her first child Connie was born. Later she was in the Mothers Union for many years. Her husband to be, Charlie, took the service at the Lostock Hall Convalescent Home, and Connie played piano for the hymns. Charlie was also in the choir and a Sunday School superintendent.

Connie and Charlie bought their house at 69 Brownedge Road, when it had been built by Mr Swarbrick. All the girls were born there. They lived there for 35 years. There are many happy memories from that home and many friends were made.

In 1953 St James Tennis Club Courts were built on land donated free by Mr Pilling. They were between Lostock Hall Station and the tea rooms. There were two courts. The boys of the church lay the tarmac and the girls painted all the posts. Connie (junior) remembers they spent all summer there. It was opened on June 2nd 1953 which was Coronation Day. The had a tournament planned but it rained so they just had the meal at St James. It flourished for about 7 or 8 years.

Expresso Riveria was a coffee bar, which was formerly the Blacksmiths, across from the Pleasant Retreat. It was looked on as a 'den of inequity' by some of the older residents of the village. Frequented by the younger generation and motorcyclists.

Some of the lads who rode their motor bikes down Bashall's often said 'They had done a ton !'
Happy 100th Birthday
Connie, we hope you have many more !



'Jaqueline Nelson
, Connie Sumner,
Connie Rowley'

Photographs from Farington Past



**Sunday School Concert St Paul's Institute and St Paul's Endowed C of E
c.1936. Photo courtesy of Mrs Edna Stringer**



**St Paul's Church Lad's Brigade with Rev'd V. Whitsey
Photo courtesy of Mrs Edna Stringer**



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- Gill Remson, Lea, Preston

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- Mrs Wood, Fulwood, Preston

"A professional LPA service with a fixed price solution, no hidden extras. I would certainly recommend giving Stephen a call"
- Alan Brownrigg, Fulwood, Preston

TIP: An LPA can be used before incapacity strikes, eg., when someone has 'lost confidence' in dealing with everyday financial matters and prefers not to deal with banks, etc.

Call Stephen on: 01772 367900

Lostock Hall Memories

I have lived in Lostock Hall all my life, the family house was No. 8 Lord's Ave, my grandparents lived at No. 3 and three other aunts lived at Nos. 6, 10 and 12, so we were a close family.

I share some of Brian Whittle's memories, Johnny Flanagan and his delicious ice-cream and Bidwell's fresh fish cart, also Nellie Charnley's chip shop.

I have lots of happy memories playing out with friends, making our own entertainment, dressing up as different characters, and having make-believe processions. The summers seemed to be long, with lots of sunshine and we spent many happy hours fishing in Dandy Brook for tiddlers and playing at the local farms. We helped with hay-making and potato picking. We were allowed to wander and go for walks around the lanes without anything undesirable happening.

I attended Lostock Hall Council School, the headmistress was Miss Smith and the headmaster Mr Griffiths. Miss Haycraft was our cookery teacher, who not only taught us cookery but basic hygiene in the kitchen, one of the procedures being to always 'scrub the way the grains go on your pastry board.' Something I still remember at times.

I remember one of the teachers catching me one day painting my finger nails with ink from the ink well. I was duly caned for this, I never did it again.

Another teacher used to throw the chalk if anyone was misbehaving. They wouldn't get away with that these days.

I have happy memories also of the Methodist Chapel where I used to go, morning service, Sunday School in the afternoon and evening service at 6.30. pm. I was a Sunday School teacher for some time before going to do my nurse training. We had the Sunday School Anniversary every year, and we also had the May Day processions along with the crowning of the Rose Queen. This took place on the field where the Albrighton estate is now. The lady who performed the honours when I was crowned May Queen was PNE player's Ken Horton's wife.

We also had a drama group staging short plays and operettas. We had such fun and laughter when rehearsing.

At Christmas time we had the parties and also Christmas bazaars. I remember the Methodist Chapel Hall being set out with tables all around it, displaying all these lovely linens and gifts that the Chapel ladies had made and embroidered. There was always a



lovely clean linen smell, they were such happy times, a pity the Chapel had to close. When I left school I worked at the Co-op at the corner of Lancaster Rd and Ormskirk Rd for about 3 years before realising that this wasn't what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. So I asked my Dad about going nursing – he said no at first, didn't think I would cope with it – he was an ambulance man during the war so had a little medical knowledge, anyhow he did allow me to go. In April 1957 I left home to do my General Nurse Training at the Old P.R.I., something I have no regrets about and would do the same again. I met my husband while doing my training. I still live in Lostock Hall and when walking our little dog I can retrace my steps many times with nostalgia from childhood memories of the village. I would like to share with you 2 of the walks I remember doing as a child but a different route maybe today.

Walk One

I am the eldest of three children and each Sunday morning our Dad used to walk us to Avenham Park whilst our Mum made Sunday Dinner. Our route took around Old School Lane to Shady Lane and reaching what we used to call Jenny Green Teeth, here we would bear left through the fields and eventually to Preston Junction leading to the Old Tram Road. We walked in all weathers and were particularly glad to reach the Avenham bridge in the cold frosty weather because there used to be a hut just on the left before you actually went over it that sold hot drinks and snacks – the hot Vimto was really welcoming and sustained us to make the return journey home. The concrete base of the hut is still visible at times in the field. Happy memories.

Walk Two

Following my Grandma's death in 1945 certain times and usually on nice sunny days my mother would say 'Let's have a walk to the church-yard (St Paul's, Farington Moss) to Grandma's grave'. This walk led us down a lane and to what is now 'Sherdley Cottage'. We used to call in to see Maggie Suggetts who lived there, I can remember playing in the orchard whilst my Mum and Maggie had a chat sometimes joined by Lizzie Clayton. I also remember going into the cottage and was amazed at all the religious figures covered underneath glass domes she had. There was always a smell of lamp-oil, but still nice times and memories that we enjoyed our visits.

Written by Pat Robinson



My Years at Lostock Hall Methodist Church 1972-2010

Lostock Hall Methodist Church closed in July 2010 having celebrated its centenary in 2005. The white building further along Watkin Lane was the church before this one was built. In my years at the church this building was our Sunday School. Lancashire County Council rented the hall for a youth club.

I do not know what is going to happen to either building now. I am sad to think the church building may be altered so much that it will not be recognised as once being a place of Christian worship.

I came to live in Lostock Hall when I married in 1964. The wedding was at Penwortham Methodist Church. My children were christened there and we attended morning worship.

In 1972, the man, Tony Bradshaw, who had given us a lift to church moved to Penwortham and so the move to Lostock Hall Church took place. Peter had started school and had become friendly with Paul Bonser who belonged to the Sunday School.

The three of us walked from Browned Road over the double railway bridges to the church each Sunday morning. Sometimes we turned down Todd Lane South and walked through the Albrighton estate. There were several grumbles from Peter and Catriona when this walk was in cold or rainy weather. Ernie, my husband, would take us in the car whenever he was available. As he worked shifts as a train driver he often had worked late Saturday night and into Sunday morning, so was in bed. Some Sundays he worked from early morning.

I held several posts over my 38 years at the church, my first was as a Sunday School teacher. An elderly lady had wished to retire and asked me if I would take over her class. This I did. When Linda and Derek North moved to Morecambe, I also took over Linda's position as Sunday School superintendent.

My class was made up of all girls, two sets of twins, Anne and Janet Kenyon, and Elizabeth (Liz) and Anne Kirkby, the rest of the

class were Dianne Barnish, Jackie and Pauline Eaves, Carol Hobin, and Mandy (sorry I have forgotten your surname, I am old now, and my memory isn't so good). The girls are all married now and some have grown up children, in fact, some of them are grandmothers. Time flies. I happily still hear from time to time about my girls and their families.

I thoroughly enjoyed teaching the class about The Bible, especially Jesus, and how to lead a Christian life. We had many discussions on lots of subjects, all of the girls were a pleasure to be with as they were polite, keen to learn and always willing to listen.

One of our discussions was about starting a junior club, my girls were willing to help within the club and I asked several adults for assistance. Joan Robinson, Janine Swinburn, Colin Bonser and John Smithson very willingly came every Tuesday evening. The club was for children aged 7-11 and was open to all children of the village. This club continued for many years under other leaderships from 1980.

Before I came to the church, they held a field day on a Saturday afternoon in summer. When Lunar caravans bought the land this became impossible to hold. The Sunday School staff and my girls asked me would it be possible to have some in our Sunday School building (the white building).



We decided to make the weekend of the Sunday School anniversary a two day event. The Saturday afternoon was a social event. We had a Queen and attendants who were presented to the invited opener who crowned the queen. There were stalls, refreshments and games. The girls of the Sunday School and Junior Club wanted to give some form of entertainment for parents and visitors. After a discussion, it was decided to do a Morris Dance routine. The girls practised weekly under the guidance of Margaret Havell. On the day they certainly deserved the load of hand claps they received. This troupe continued for many years under the leadership of Carol Hobin and her mum, Dot. They went to entertain in retirement homes and other establishments. Several times they took part in the Lostock Hall Carnival.

The first opener of the social Saturday event was Mrs Walker. She crowned Dianne Barnish, gave her a gift and then I had to make a speech. I said some words and then was to present Mrs Walker with a gift, a necklace. I have never been able to forget, I made a slip up. When I presented the gift, I said 'I wish to present Mrs Walker with a gift, to thank you for your years of teaching in the Sunday School and for being our opener today.' For many years after I was called by members of my class 'Mrs Necklace'.

Other years the entertainment took place on the Saturday evening. A play or a musical. Everyone came once a week to practice their lines. Ernie Kenyon, the Church organist was our brilliant pianist and prompter. The audience thoroughly enjoyed each performance and parents, plus myself were very proud of the cast and helpers.

We were, as a whole church, going to walk around the Albrighton estate and the streets near to the white building on Sunday morning. Our church banner was old, so several ladies offered to help make a new one. Janine Swinburn and I went to town to buy materials and embroidery threads. I asked Liz Kirkby if she would help with the design that I wanted on the banner. This was a cross, an open Bible, and praying hands. She did a brilliant job which made the next part of the work easier. Her mum Alice, Janine Swinburn and myself did hours and hours of embroidery, stitching to attach the three symbols to the background cloth and then to finish it off by attaching it to a backing cloth. Gentlemen of the church put in the poles etc, so it could be carried around. I remember I donated one of the straps which had belonged to my grandfather.

On Sunday morning the church walked behind the held high banner which depicted three important symbols of our faith. We had a Boys Brigade Band leading us. Our invited speaker spoke to the people of the estate and streets and invited them to the anniversary services in the afternoon and evening. In the afternoon and evening services children performed songs and said recitations. The had all learned their pieces off by heart. Talking of a support of a different kind now. The men of the Church erected the stage for the services. The children sat on the stage which looked like a wide set of stairs, it was above the communion table and rail and against the pulpit. We had to make sure all the children had been to the loo before they climbed onto the stage. I do not remember having to get anyone off the stage during the performance.

The evening service was performed by my class. They were the teenagers and the oldest children in Sunday School. This service was of a more serious nature than the afternoon one.

Another service when they children took the main parts were the nativity play.

To be continued next month by Margaret Heyes.



A Tardy Gate Girl (9)

In the spring of 1957 some of the boys and girls had the opportunity to go to a boarding school for three months if they wished. The boys went somewhere down south while the girls went to Whiteacre in Whalley. The cost was 12/6 per week. I was one of the girls allowed to go, along with my friends Enid and Brenda Makepeace. I presume it must have been decided at home that I should be told a little about sex before I went away. It was while I was walking down towards Mercer Road with my sister-in-law that the subject was brought up. I decided that it was best to let her ramble on to see if what she said corresponded with the sparse knowledge I had gained. When she had finished I asked her if she had got it quite right? I just wanted to make sure of things, which prompted her to ask me if I already knew. Of course I said yes, well I did know a certain amount by then. She also decided to tell me about my mother being illegitimate (a bastard as she put it). I wasn't really aware of this, as I thought that both my grandparents on my mother's side had died before I was born. I certainly did not know what a bastard was, I had never heard the word before. I remember feeling unhappy at the way I was told, and concerned that it was a very private matter between my mother and dad, and should not be discussed by others. My mother was still my mother when all was said and done. She could not help the circumstances of her birth. I decided to keep this information to myself, it was nobody else's business anyway.

On the day we went to boarding school we all had to meet at Starch House Square in Preston to board the bus. Enid was on the last minute as usual. Her mother had not got all the things she needed, so the bus had to wait while Enid's mum ran across to the market to purchase the required items.

On arrival at Whiteacre we were shown into dormitories and allocated a bunk. I had the top bunk while Brenda had the bottom. I'll never forget the day when Brenda decided to stick a darning needle into my bunk. I was sat on it at the time and nearly fell off.

The school was very regimented. Every morning before breakfast each dormitory would have a locker and bed check. All the clothes had to be folded neatly with the fold facing outwards. Shoes had to be clean and neatly lined up, and beds had to be made with hospital corners. If things were not in order they had to be re-done. Each pupil was given a weekly duty. Mine happened to be the welly and suitcase room. It usually became quite messy in there and it would take me ages to sweep up and make sure everything was in its place.

All the meals were eaten in the canteen. Each day a group of girls would have a baking lesson. If it happened to be one of the girls on your table, the cakes and biscuits would be eaten at teatime. These lessons proved to be very good, as each girl would do her best to make sure her cakes turned out right. Nobody wanted their efforts to be criticised by the others on her table.

Besides baking and all the other general subjects we were also shown how to do quilting and carving from balsa wood. The carving was disastrous for me, but the quilting was brilliant. We had to make our own designs and print them onto a piece of satin. The design was then had sewn onto a piece of wadding. Once that was done another piece of satin was sewn to the back of the wadding to finish off the quilt. The end result was really amazing.

Tuesday evening was hair washing night. We all had to sit in the library reading while

our hair dried. This was also where discussions on 'It' took place. The teacher who was with us in the library did not mind these discussions at all. Some of the girls had started to menstruate while they were at school, so the conversations took place quite naturally without the furtiveness and embarrassment. This is where I started to realise exactly what was being said, and the strange whisperings in the schoolyard were at last making sense.

After breakfast on Fridays we had to learn psalms off by heart and then recite them. I soon found out that I could learn them very quickly, but was a little hesitant to recite them first. I used to let one of the other girls do it first then I would follow. After a while when my confidence had developed more, I decided that I would not wait for the other girl and just went ahead and recited the psalm. Once we had done that we were allowed to practice playing hockey. Hockey was a new sport but it came to me very easily. The principles of the game being the same as football, you just used a stick instead of your feet. One day I was chosen to be on a team. By half time we were winning 8 nil. I was told to change sides and we won 9-8. I didn't score all the goals but I did help to make them. This is where my playing football for years on the front field came in useful.

I was chosen to play for the school team at their next match. We were beaten 2-1. That wasn't a bad score really, because the other school was a permanent boarding school not a one term one.

Each Saturday morning we were allowed to go into Clitheroe. We had 1/6d pocket money to buy essentials like toothpaste and soap. On Sundays we all went to Whalley Abbey for Sunday Service. On the way back we would spend the remainder of our pocket money on a glass of hot Vimto.

After about four weeks we were allowed a weekend at home. With living in a dormitory, the front room of my house looked very small. I kept asking my mum and dad if the walls had been moved inwards, it was really very strange.

Following a further four weeks it was Parents Visiting Day. I remember standing in the square at the front of the school waiting for our parents to arrive. We were watching to tops of the cars pass by the hedge at the far side of the field. Some of the cars were quite posh, then I suddenly thought about my dad's car. It was a home made three wheeler, painted pale green and was called Sir Walter. It was really a square box on wheels. Suddenly there was a great peal of laughter, Sir Walter was coming down the drive. Hunched up in the back was my friend Anne. I wasn't quite sure what my emotions were, nobody had laughed at the car before. I suddenly felt very sorry for my dad, how dare anybody laugh. The car was my dad's pride and joy. We had only had a motorbike and sidecar before, and Sir Walter could beat any of my uncle's cars when we were coming back from Southport. I was so pleased to see my mum and dad and Anne, so I decided to ignore the laughter and enjoy the day with them.

My time spent at Whiteacre proved to be very useful. It made me able to take care of myself, my clothes and surroundings and boosted my confidence. The only downside to it was that my grandmother Eliza, had told all my relatives that I had been sent to Borstal. This infuriated my mother who informed my grandmother that Borstal was for boys, and you did not pay to send anyone to reform school. I didn't worry me too much. I had grown up with the impression that I wasn't up to much in my grandmothers eyes.

By Jackie StuartContinued next month

Pete Reilly

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