

The Preston Magazine



Issue 1

The Night Hawk

The Old Black Bull

Summer Beauty of the Parks

Mr Joseph Jackson

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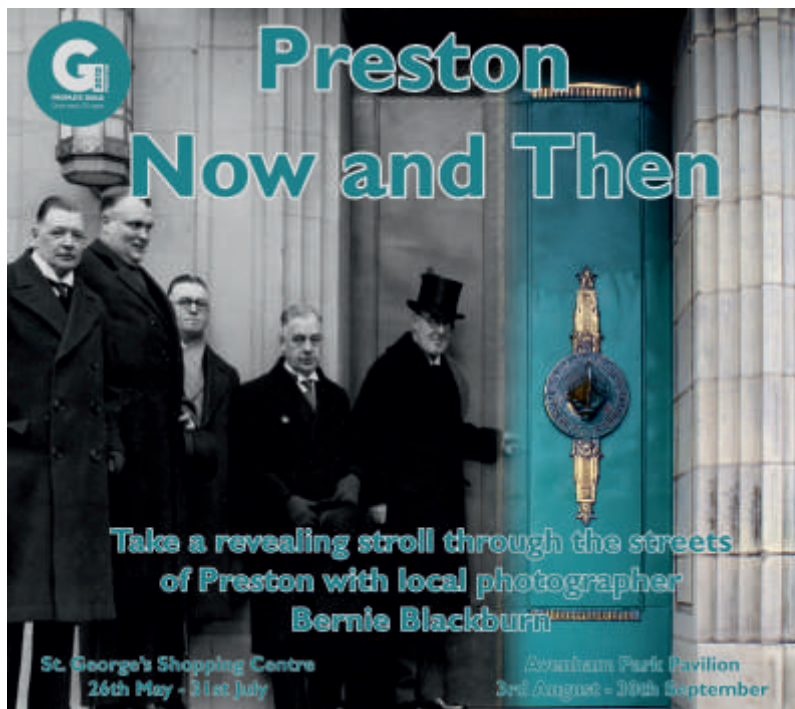


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A big thank you goes out to our advertisers because without them we could not produce this magazine. Please support them whenever you can. Please do contact us if you would like to advertise within our pages.

I would like to thank Priory Sports and Technology College for their help and support with the production of the magazine, there is a link on their website www.priory.lancs.sch.uk that will enable you to read all our issues online, as well as our sister magazine, The Penwortham Magazine.

Many thanks to Steve Halliwell for his article on The Old Black Bull, Paul D. Swarbrick who wrote the Preston Past series for Blog Preston, www.blogpreston.co.uk, Robert Gregson and Peter Vickers.

Should you require a copy each month please contact us.

We are looking for images and stories relating to Preston, so write down your memories and send them to us.

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

Front Cover image is by kind permission of Adrian Greenhalgh.

Look at the Preston groups on Flickr, there are thousands of images old and new for you to enjoy.

Regards

Heather

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Mr Joseph Jackson

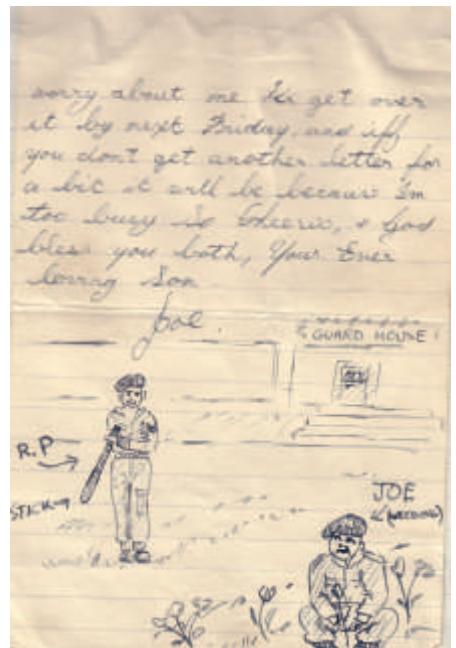
When Joseph Jackson began his National Service in 1950 he loved to keep in touch with his parents, Nancy and John, and sent letters home to his family at 10 Robin Street, Preston.

Joe was stationed at Catterick and Tidworth during his two years conscription. He became good pals with Bernard Platt, from Manchester. Joe liked to brighten up his letters home with sketches of what was going on while he was away.

When he had finished his National Service he and Bernard kept in touch. Joe and his wife Doreen, went to visit Bernard and they took along his letters and sketches, and they would reminisce about their time together. As the years went by they lost touch. Joe just thought he had lost his letters.

50 years later Joe came across Bernard on the website Friends Reunited, he invited him to come to Preston to celebrate his Golden Wedding Anniversary at The Phantom Winger on 24th January, 2003. When Bernard arrived he brought with him the letters and drawings he had looked after for over 50 years. What a great surprise it was for Joe and his family, as he was able to share them with his wife, Doreen, their children and grandchildren. They are great collection of his thoughts and memories of the time.

Mrs Doreen Jackson has kindly allowed us to print some of these sketches. Sadly Joe died in 2006.



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The first in a series of articles, written
by pub historian **Steve Halliwell**



THE OLD BLACK BULL, FRIARGATE.

The Old Black Bull Hotel now stands as an end of row building on Friargate, as we meet the Ringway from a northerly direction. It hasn't always been that way, the building standing several properties away from the old Lune Street, which connected Friargate with Fishergate. There still is that connection, but it's not quite as obvious. The Bull's claim to fame, as it were, certainly on a local basis, is that there was a tunnel which ran from the cellars of the hotel, beneath all the buildings between it and St. George's Church, 'for the specific use of the clergy' in their quest for liquid sustenance.

The truth is that there are tunnels running beneath most, if not all, of the public houses in the city, some of them continuing for a mile or more. The probability is that they were predominantly Victorian in origin, and intended as a probable means of waste removal. It is easy to see, with a modicum of imaginative lateral thinking, how these tales arise. It is certainly likely that they were used for purposes other than those intended, and the older the establishment the more reasons can be imagined. They make good stories whatever the truth.

The commonly recorded history of the hotel extends as far back as 1818, although local historian, Colin Stansfield, has mentioned a Black Bull in Friargate in 1776. There is no doubt that the current building will be a replacement for that building, and possibly the second replacement. What is certain is that in 1831, at the height of the Radical Liberal uprising in Preston, Henry 'The Orator' Hunt, and briefly the M.P. for the town, appeared at the first floor window of the Black Bull to address a huge crowd that had gathered in Friargate to hear him.

It has to be remembered that public houses were the most accessible centres for public meetings, and ten years later, the celebrated Chartist agitator, Bronterre O'Brien, held a meeting in the hotel, when 300 members were charged one old penny to be admitted to hear his lecture, which were usually of an inflammatory nature. O'Brien had only been released from Lancaster Prison the previous week after serving a sentence for sedition, and the report of the meeting in the Preston Chronicle ended with the following prediction – 'It is whispered that he will soon have to listen to a lecture from one of the sheriff substitutes for the County Palatine of Lancashire!'

Things may not be the way they were in the distant history of the Old Black Bull, but it continues to play its part in the economy of the town. It has a striking exterior which is familiar even to those who have never passed through the entrance door. Memories of those residents of Preston who have ventured through the door, particularly those of a certain age, will recall that it is one of those establishments that has benefitted from long-serving, strong, management, from William 'Billy' Reid – a former boxer – in the late 1960's and 70's, Len Cherry in the 80's, to the present landlord, Stan Eaton, who has been the landlord for 22 years.

The Bull is now controlled under a lease by G.T. Pubs of Norfolk, and is renowned locally and not-so-locally for its tremendous range of cask ales. There are always about ten traditional ales on the counter, with many more in the cellars just waiting for their turn to make an appearance before the customers! Stan, who has full control over what he sells, is eagerly awaiting the Guild Festivities, when five of his suppliers have brewed a 'Special' for our Guild period pleasure.

Visit <http://pubsinpreston.blogspot.com> for more information about the Old Black Bull and 750 more inns, taverns and beer-houses that have formed a part of Preston's interesting past.

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THE OLD SATURDAY NIGHT CLUB

THE MEMBERS OF THE OLD SATURDAY NIGHT CLUB

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Rich. Walton
Rich. Baines
John Alsop
Tho. Russell
Wm. Collison
John Watson, senr.
Sam. Crane
Wm. Carr
Wm. Bowran
John Ainsworth
Miles Forrest
Thos. Myers
Rob. Leach
Hen. Fisher

Although we have no date, the above names were on a card, and from enquiries we believe it to be from the dates 1788 to 1792. The club had then been many years in existence and continued some years into the 19th century. The objects of the club, and the way in which it was conducted, are set forth in the following extract from Mr William Dobson's published lecture on 'Preston in the Olden Time' *Towards the close of the last century, there was in Preston a 'Saturday Night Club' which was attended by the tradesmen and shopkeepers of the town, who met together to enjoy their pipe and glass, and talk over the news. It was the custom at each meeting to appoint, in turns, one of the members to look out during the ensuing week for the house at which the best ale was being sold. The club was to be held there, and it was the duty of the ale taster for the time being, when he had obtained this important information, to write the name of the inn on a slate hung behind the door of the shop at the corner of Fishergate and Cheapside, kept by Mrs Alsop, a relative, and predecessor in business, of the late Mr Leach, hosier. I have been told by an old townsman that he was often sent, when an apprentice to look at the slate, in order to ascertain, for his master, where the club would meet. About the same time there was also a club of the more aristocratic inhabitants, and this met more frequently; indeed, I believe, every night. This club varied its headquarters as to the quality of the ale, and the same course was taken to obtain information as to where the best ale was sold. The shop where the slate was hung for the 'Old Chums' as this club was called, was the one kept by Mr William Wilson, draper, in the Old Shambles. An old gentleman informs me that he was often, when a boy, asked by an alderman, a member of the club, to 'run to Billy Wilson's to see where the 'Old Chums' meet tonight.'*
Continued next month

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Preston Past: The Shambles, Lancaster Road



In the first of this series of bygone times in Preston, we have an image of what is now Lancaster Road and was formerly known as 'The Shambles'.

The location of the view in this image is what would now be the Miller Arcade, Jacson Street and the Harris Library & Museum. How different it looks today and I tend to think that the odour around that area would have been quite offensive around the time the butchers from the nearby shops used to pour out offal and other animal waste onto the pavement. It must have been an ordeal passing along there in that time.

Most of the town's butchers could be found displaying their wares behind the columns. The end property, which was on the corner of 'Gin Bow Entry' (roughly where Harris Street is now), was Cottam's Shoulder of Mutton Inn, appropriately named given what was going on further down the road. At the other end of this row along The Shambles, towards Church Street, was a small building which was Prestons first Post Office.

This very old row was demolished in 1896 to make way for the Harris Library & Museum and subsequently the Miller Arcade.

“Shambles” was a name originally used for a street of butchers shops where meat was slaughtered and sold. It is derived from the Middle English word schamel, which meant a bench, as for displaying meat for sale.

Most of the images in this series of articles are by courtesy of the brilliant [Preston Digital Archive](#) which is an online archive of images of Preston's past.

Preston Digital Archive

Annual Appeal

Our initial goal of collecting 8000 images before the commencement of Preston Guild 2012 has been met, but we need your help to expand the collection even more. So, cap in hand, like Oliver Twist, we humbly ask for more.

We know you must have musty old albums, biscuits tins and the odd sock drawer full of interesting items of Preston and the surrounding areas past. So how can you submit them to us

Read on !

1. If you have the ability to scan them to your computer, you can send them to our email address as attachments (300 dpi. Photo quality please) to prestondigitalarchive@hotmail.com
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3. For heavier/bulky items such as postcard collection etc. one of our local volunteers may be able to pick up and collect or scan on site. Please let us know your preference. (Call us on 07733 321911)

So what are we looking for, obviously photographs form the core of our collection, images of commercial or industrial activity, lost streets and buildings, social activity and gatherings etc. We love to receive post cards, especially RP-PPC (Real Photo Picture Post Cards) Ephemera covers a broad spectrum of items and would include such items as theatre programmes, invitations, magazine articles, old advertisements and newspaper cuttings, also old church magazines.

At present the upper date range is 1990. We also try and confine the general geographical area to Preston, Penwortham, Fulwood, Grimsargh, Walton le Dale, Bamber Bridge and Lostock Hall.

Finally we welcome any suggestions you might have for improving our archive. You can see our archive on Flickr, to date we have received over 3,000,000 views, with an average daily count of +8000.

Thankyou for your interest and hopefully support.

Also a big thankyou to all Preston Digital Archive viewers.

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Scientific Marvels

On Wednesday evening, by the permission of Messrs. Calvert and Sons, Mr C.H. Sharples, tried a few experiments with the telephone and microphone on the telegraph wire which connects the mills of the firm at Walton-le-dale and their Indian Mill in New Hall-lane. A few members of the Preston Scientific Society had been invited. At the Preston end there were with Mr Sharples, Dr Arminston, of Fulwood, Dr Dixon, Dr Oliver, Mr Parker and others, and at the Walton end, Messrs. Atherton and Pateson, the Rev. J. Shortt, of Hoghton and friends. In the early part of the evening the experiments were only partially successful in consequence of the buzz and hum, and at times complete roar, as heard in the telephone from the government wires at Walton Bridge, where Messrs. Calvert's wires crosses the river along with them. Occassionally there was a lull, when conversation was carried on with freedom, by means of a wire, but resistance was very considerable. Towards 9 o'clock the interruption ceased, and every utterance of the voice spoken into the mouth of the telephone was heard distinctly either way. Mr Sharples at the Preston end, read for the Rev. Mr Shortt, at Walton, an account of the discovery of the remains stags and oak trees when sinking down to the rock for the foundation for the south buttress in the widening of the North Union Railway Bridge across the Ribble as reported in Wednesday's papers. Every word was heard. Small pellets of paper rolled up between the finger and thumb, weighing perhaps half a grain each, when dropped on the sounding board, sounded like pebbles. The delicate stroke of a camel hair pencil brush sounded like a stroke with sand paper. When the instrument was blown upon the roar in the receiving telephone was too much for the ear, and the sound escaped in spurts as if from a penny trumpet. Mr Atherton hung on his watch, and the slow click-click, told instantly that it was a dead beat half-seconds. The sound of it was louder when held in the hand close to the ear. The beating of a quarter-seconds gold watch sounded like one of the noisy American cricket timepieces which are too noisy to be tolerated in the sitting room. The grating, half-hoarse, uneven, gingling best of a cheap Geneva watch, sounded like the weaving of a loom, or the loud beating of a Yankee eight days' spring timepiece, worked with a balance instead of a pendulum. These experiments afforded convincing proof that the microphone is to the ear, what the microscope is to the eye. The inaudible becomes audible and the invisible visible, according to the degree of the magnifying power. The instruments were made by Mr Sharples, and the gentlemen who remained to the last were highly gratified. There is an art in speaking, as well as in listening when using the telephone. A sharp clear voice is required, and an attentive ear. In astronomical observations the eye to be trained to see to a nicety, and in using the telephone the ear needs to be similarly trained and practised, if a person had not a natural aptitude for pursuits of this character.



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SEDAN CHAIRS IN PRESTON'S PAST

DEATH OF AN OLD TOWNSMAN – Our obituary column today contains the name of an old townsman, Peter Whittle, who died last Saturday, in Cheetham-street, at the advanced age of 77. His occupation had, however, gone before him. He was a sedan chair carrier, and in his younger days his craft was in much demand. He was, we believe, the last survivor of those who plied that trade, which for some years has been altogether 'a thing of the past'.

Preston Guardian, November 20th, 1861.

PRESTON - THEN AND NOW 1843 – 1893

....it was necessary to demolish a row of 5 or 6 stucco-fronted houses, on part of whose site now stand Harding & Co's tram carriage office and stables in Fishergate. These old houses took the fancy back to the days when sedan chairs were the only mode of personal conveyance in Preston. The iron palisades in front of them were provided with the means of extinguishing the torches carried by the link-boys when the occupant of the sedan chair had reached home. The extinguisher was in the form of a bell of a trumpet worked in with the iron palisades, and the torch was extinguished by being thrust therein.

Preston, March 4th, 1893

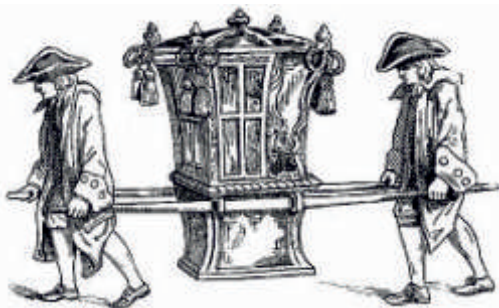
NATIONAL CUSTOMS In the south of England, a child's corpse, on being taken to the grave, is always either carried or put into a hearse; in the north the whole retinue, including mourners and pall-bearers, with the coffin, are placed in one coach, or sometimes the coffin and chief mourner (as at Preston) is put into a sedan chair, the roof of which is covered with white feathers.

Preston Chronicle, May 14th, 1831.

Yesterday week, aged 83, Mr John Clitheroe, sedan chair carrier, North-road.

Preston Guardian, January 28th, 1854.

In 1785 –91 the political differences which divided the town extended even to the sedan chairs ! The coats of the chairmen had collars of the colour of one or other of the two great parties, and as the ladies were quite as warm in their political differences as the rougher sex. They showed their predilections not only in the ribbons they wore but in the choice of their sedans. A lady of the family of Peddar, Starkie or Gorst, would have walked home in a thunderstorm before she would have been carried in a Derby or Burgoyne chair, while the wives and daughters of the Shawes, Hornbys and Whiteheads would have missed going to the best ball of the season rather than have been taken there in a Corporation Sedan.



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A Preston Lad by Arthur Eric Crook

Chapter One

My advent into this world was Dickenson to say the least, although the parallels to Oliver Twist's beginnings appear to be fanciful, they are in fact true.

I was born on 24th April, in the year of our Lord, 1917. is in the third year of waging war against , a terrible war, which began when the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro- Hungarian throne, was assassinated by a , Gavrillo Princep, in Sarajavo. The quarrel involved so many countries it became world wide and known as The Great War.

Place names became familiar in Britain where fierce battles had taken place. , , and became a sea of mud, in which British Tommies, ate, slept, fought and died. 1917, also saw the arrival of Spanish Influenza, which decimated the population of the country. I, for one survived the holocaust and was born under the roof at the Work house in Preston.

Born to a domestic servant, one Janet Crook, probably disowned by her own family, and I was her illegitimate offspring. A bastard. No choice of abortions, unmarried mothers homes, assistance from one's family in those days, but it is to this young lady I owe my being. I understand, though I am not entirely sure, that I was a result of a dalliance with a soldier called George from the local barracks. Who apparently in the parlance of the day 'never came back' presumably killed in action, maybe he did, but this is what I was told.

Often I have stood and gazed at the old building and thoughts of the past conjure up a picture of a frightened young girl giving birth to me in such a foreboding place. It is a huge building, still standing, it is where I started out on my journey in life. Not that I remember any of it, had I known what was in store I surely would have yelled. Unwanted and unloved having been taken from or given up by my mother, I was bestowed with the name Arthur Eric, by the master and matron of the said establishment. A Mr and Mrs Stephenson, whom I would get to meet and know later in my childhood.

To be continued



SUMMER BEAUTY OF THE PARKS

It is a matter for regret that a greater number of our townspeople do not visit the parks, when as at present they are all in their summer glory and perfection. Few comparatively appear to be aware that Preston possesses three public enclosures, which for natural beauty or as illustrations of clever landscape gardening would be difficult to equal, let alone surpass, in the whole of the United Kingdom. It is easy to forget when wandering along the many pretty walks, canopied in all the loveliness of the leafy month of June, that we are in a garden at the very door of a great population. The surroundings are such as to lead one's thoughts to peaceful sylvan glades, far from smoke, from turmoil, and the madding crowd. How many of those who these summer evenings stroll along under the avenue of limes on Avenham Walks care to remember that some of the old trees, were there before a single factory was erected in this town. Still the pollarded limes may be seen breaking into leaf as prettily as their sapling companions planted not many years before. The limes that have been so tastefully planted along the old Tram-road are full of promise, and doubtless in a few years will make one of the finest avenues in this part of the country. Many of them are already fairly-well established and growing well. There is another avenue along the river side – between the Tram-road and East Lancashire Bridge - which may just now be seen in all their fresh colours, growing beautifully, and forming a bright, green canopy, as their leaves intermingle along its whole length. A continuation of this avenue flanks Miller Park. Here there are chestnut trees instead of limes, but they are not so even in growth, it will be noticed, as the first named avenue, as some of them are exposed to a strong wind at the time they are budding, and do not progress as much as others do. Still the chestnut avenue is very pretty, and some day it will be the glory of Miller Park. It is a source of regret in many quarters that the avenue is not continued along the river side as far as Penwortham Bridge, so as to meet the trees that were planted along Broadgate thirty or more years ago. Why should not chestnut or limes be planted along the garden fronts, or at any rate one row of trees along the river side. There is another pretty avenue – of sycamores – along the West-cliff entrance to Miller Park, where it will be noticed that the rhododendrons have suffered more than a little from the severe weather, and the flowers do not show as well as usual on account of the foliage being damaged of the cause referred to combined with the smoke from the adjacent railways, which every year more and more is becoming a great drawback to the growth in the parks. Why are not steps taken to endeavour to lessen the emitting of so much smoke from the passing engines? Surely the nuisance might be mitigated or abolished if representations were made in the proper quarter. There has been a very attractive display of tulips, with their artistic contrasts, but these spring floral beauties were late, and the summer occupants of these various beds are only now being put in. The well kept slopes and lawns, with the bright varying tints of the shrubs and trees of this park, are nearly all that could be desired. It would be difficult to find a neater or better kept garden anywhere near a town either in this county or the next, a fact which reflects much credit on the careful supervision and artistic skill of Mr Rowbotham. It is no unusual thing to hear from visitors from Manchester or Liverpool referring to the large sums of money there spent on the parks, and admitting that the results are nothing to compare with what may be seen on the banks of the Ribble.

Preston Chronicle June 4th 1892.



The Early Railway Companies

The Blackburn and Preston Railway

A line from Blackburn to Preston had been considered as early as 1840, when a consortium of local landlords and mill owners looked at the feasibility of such a venture. The idea was shelved for a while, perhaps as a result of the estimated cost of considerable engineering work in the Houghton area. Such obstacles, however, did not detract from the enthusiasm and determination of the noted Blackburn printer and business promoter, Charles Tiplady. He regarded such a rail link with the port town of Preston as being of great benefit to the industries of Blackburn – not to mention his own share holding interests – and became the driving force behind the project. Things began to move forward quickly and in 1843 Joseph Locke was appointed engineer for the proposed line. A revised survey was carried out by his assistant, John Collister, and the bill for the Blackburn and Preston Railway (B&PR) was passed by Parliament on June 6, 1844.

Work commenced immediately and was carried out in two sections: Houghton to Blackburn and Farington to Houghton; the contractor for the former was John Stephenson and for the latter, Nowell and Hattersley. The first sod was ceremoniously cut at Houghton on August 20, 1844 and it was the section from Houghton to Blackburn that involved the heavier engineering work, with the line having to cross the River Darwen at Houghton and again at Pleasington. A viaduct built of stone from the local quarry, crossed the deep gorge at Houghton Bottoms. It has a height of 108 ft. from the river bed to the level of the track, with three arches, each having a span of 65 ft. It took eight months to build at the cost of £10,000. The following quote from a Preston journalist praises the completed work: 'Seen from the glen below, this viaduct is a truly magnificent object; blending in and not destroying the romantic grandeur of the Alpine pass, which it bestrides'. Further up the line at Pleasington, the Darwen was crossed by a timber viaduct with five spans, which carried the tracks 60 ft above the level of the riverbed. This was replaced by an imposing and more substantial stone structure in 1865. The Farington to Houghton section offered comparatively easy work for engineers and navvies. The line joined the North Union (NU) railway at a point just to the south of Farington station; and from here it curved away in a westward direction to the first station on the line at Bamber Bridge. From this point the line ascended in a severe 1 in 100 gradient for some three and a half miles to the east of Houghton Station, with a short descent to Houghton viaduct and then an ascent of around 1 in 200 for the rest of the way to Blackburn, via Pleasington and Cherry Tree Stations.

The arrangement at Farington was hardly one of convenience for the B&PR. The plans were drawn up from the original survey show the intended line curving to the north-west from Bamber Bridge and reaching Preston by way of a bridge over the Ribble, but this had to be abandoned when Preston Corporation objected to a third railway crossing in such close proximity to the NU and Walton Summit tramway bridges. Acrimonious disputes continued between the two railway companies until the matter was finally resolved by the East Lancashire Railway in 1847.

Continued next month taken from The Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway around Preston written by Bob Gregson. ISBN 9780956518453

A Preston Built Blockade Runner

The Union Blockade took place between 1861 and 1865, during the American Civil War, when the Union Navy maintained a strenuous effort on the Atlantic and Gulf Coast of the Confederate States of America designed to prevent the passage of trade goods, supplies, and arms to and from the Confederacy. Ships that tried to evade the blockade, known as blockade runners, were mostly newly built, high-speed ships with small cargo capacity. They were operated by the British and ran between Confederate-controlled ports and the neutral ports of Havana, Cuba; Nassau, Bahamas, and Bermuda, where British suppliers had set up supply bases.

One such blockade runner was built in Preston and a report on the launch indicates that “A very brisk trade in iron ship building is now being carried on in Preston. The main yard is situated at the far end of the Marsh, in close proximity to the Ribble, and is occupied by Mr Macker. A gentleman whose practical achievements in the “art and mystery” of iron ship building, at Preston, we have, on several previous occasions, have had the pleasure of aluding to. His works are very extensive; they employ a large number of men: since full operations were commenced on the premises, Mr Macker's hands have 'turned out,' with wonderful rapidity, several first-clas iron vessels. A remarkably fine steamer – the smartest ever put in the Ribble – was launched from the yard on Thursday afternoon. The yard was filled with spectators and the ends of the Marsh were completely crowded. Mr Maken along with several ladies and gentlemen assended to the platform and Miss Ellis of Liverpool subsequently took hold of the bottle and nerved herself for the 'christening'. In a minute from the time of the final blow, releasing the new steamer from her 'seat' on the stocks was given; the bottle was smashed against the iron front of the vessel – now called “*The Night Hawk*” – in a handsome and most irretrievable style.”

Afterwards she was tugged down the river about 100 yards and there moored. “*The Night Hawk*” had been built in a very short time – in three months. It was said that was intended to run the American blockade. The general rumour of the day of the launch was to that effect; and the representation on each of her paddle boxes – an American eagle, standing with outspread wings on bales of cotton- seemd to give a certain degree of corroboration to the supposition indulged in relative to her mission. After a few days the vessel was moved to Liverpool where powerful engines were fitted by Messers Fawcett, Preston and Co.

The “*Liverpool Post*” reported on the ship's progress leaving Liverpool on the 1st September 1864 sailing to Bermuda which was reached by the 15th September. Then came the shattering news in the London “*Morning Post*” of the 18th October that the “*Night Hawk*” had been destroyed and that the three Preston men on board had been captured! These fears were calmed by a further report in the “*Preston Chronicle*” of the 29th October when it was reported, by relating a message published in “*The Liverpool Echo*”, that the ship had run aground when passing through the New England Channel. Surrounded by small boats filled with armed men , who opened up with small arms on the crew, wounding several, the steamer was set on fire and some twenty two men including the captain were captured. Having set fire to the steamer with thirteen men left on board, some injured, the “brave Yankees” fled from the area fearing an explosion. The captain wrote “that from the prison house on board one of the blockading fleet, he could the following morning discover, with the aid of a glass, that the fire on “*The Night Hawk*” had been confined to the fore and after compartments and that the rest of the cargo had been safely landed. Early in 1865 it was reorted that “*The Night Hawk*” was in Wilmington undergoing repairs and by the 4th February the ship had reached Nassau with a cargo of cotton and was safely back in Liverpool by the 28th February. “*The Night Hawk*” made further Atlantic crossings and after the war ended the ship was bought by the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Company to run between Grimbsby and Antwerp as a cattle steamer.

Night Hawk

Words: Gregg Butler.

Music: 'Gown of Green' (trad.)

In '61 America is torn by Civil War
And blockades by the North halt shipments from Virginia's shore
The cotton trade is quite shut down, and every Preston mill
Grows strangely quiet, hands laid off and great mill engines still
Bring back the cotton bring us work, let's banish every frown
Oh give us cotton, give us work bring life to Preston town

Down on Ribble's marshy banks an iron ship grows fast
From Mackern's yard she's fitted out to sail to save our trade at last
If Night Hawk can run the blockade, bring the cotton for our trade
We'll start the engines work, again and have no need for aid
Bring back the cotton bring us work, let's banish every frown
Oh save us Night Hawk from our doom bring life to Preston town

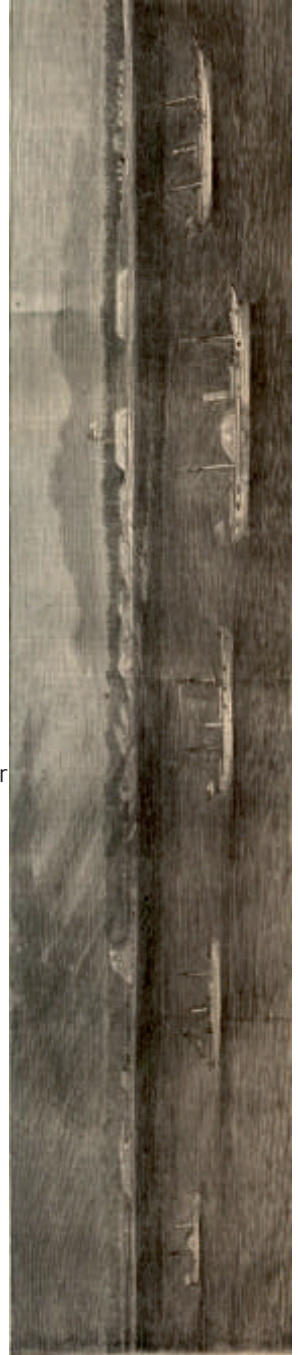
But though we need her cotton, yet we shun all Dixie's ways
For cotton rests on slavery human dignity betrays
So though we starve we must agree, support brave Lincoln's fight
Not sacrifice for money all that's decent good and right
So sing no praise to Night Hawk, though our children cry for aid
Until a just end to the war frees up the cotton trade

Yes - ten years back loud was our shout of "ten percent or die"
'We shall not live like slaves' and "No surrender" was our cry
How can we then support a land that grinds down negro slaves
Who like us are Gods children, captured, sold across the waves
So sing no praise to Night Hawk, though our children cry for aid
Until a just end to the war frees up the cotton trade

The Night Hawk's sailed from Liverpool, from Madeira's Isle she's clear
She's steamed hard to Bermuda, then to landfall at Cape Fear
Now Wilmington's upriver, thirty miles of bank and shoal
And a pilot she must take on board guide her to her goal
Bring back the cotton bring us work, let's banish every frown
Oh save us Night Hawk from our doom bring life to Preston town

But little did they know the man's incompetent, unsound
And on a sandbank far from home the Night Hawk's soon aground
By the Yankee blockade shot at, boarded, looted, set afire
The Night Hawk soon lies ruined, all hopes of success expire
No cotton but no shame for wealth with evil to conspire
For principle's at stake and Preston's honour's not for hire

Now when the war is over Preston's trade quickly revives
And back to work Prestonians flock and get on with our lives
Once more for industry far famed and innovation drives
Our town to ever greater heights, once more Proud Preston thrives
We'll spin the yarn, we weave the cloth we'll shout our fame aloud
And reaffirm each Preston Guild that Preston still is proud



THE LIFE OF A DOCKER.



After leaving the railway in 1970 I went to work as a docker on Preston Dock. My father never wanted me to be a railway man but to carry on the family tradition because my great grandfather was at Bristol Dock grandfather and father at Evenmouth Dock (although my father had at a later date been selected to work as the National Dock Labour Board Welfare Officer for Fleetwood and Preston Docks) We had all worked as dockers and if Preston Dock had stayed open my son would have followed in our footsteps. Life on the Docks could be hard or easy according to what job you were allocated to you by the foreman. Each morning at 7.45 you would congregate in a large room called the 'stud' and given your job for the week or day, it was all done on the basis of who worked last, if it was not your turn you were sent home and told to come back at 12.45 pm to see if there was any work, if not you were sent home again till the following morning. The easy jobs were on the container boats where you went to work clean and came home clean. The worst jobs were the 'bag boats' The bags could consist of anything from potatoes to basic slag etc. If you were allocated a bag boat then you worked hard for your money and I have seen on many occasions men on entering the dock gates and seeing the bag boat in the dock doing a U turn and going back home. The Sulphur boats were just as bad and if you were loading a coal boat you literally had to dig your way out of the hold of the boat. The Pulp boats I always found to be hazardous due to the fact that the crane always lifted the blocks of pulp constantly directly over your head and you could never trust the thin wires that held the pulp together not to break and result in the cargo crashing down and landing anywhere, the art of being a docker was knowing what was happening above and knowing which way to run. The Banana boats had just finished before I started on the Docks but I always remember in my previous job as a train fireman backing on to a train of banana wagons (I think we were taking them to Crewe) after hooking on and connecting the vacuum pipe was then told by my driver to connect the steam heating pipe to our train, I thought he was having a funny turn and when I questioned him about it he explained that the bananas were green and the heat helped to them ripen to a certain extent en route. Fancy keeping bananas warm, whatever next. Anyway lets carry on, the docks was always a money environment of feast and famine. Some weeks good, some weeks bad but I enjoyed every minute. As a registered docker your options for making life a little easier were very limited but towards the end I managed to find myself a nice little number as a dock checker which entailed counting of cargoes on or off the ships for quantity and quality. I managed to get the job even though my mathematics were practically non-existent (that's probably why the docks shut) But joking aside when the docks did shut and you now see what is down there was it worth all the transformation. After the docks I went as a store man to British Nuclear Fuels at Salwick and although they sometimes get a 'bad press' (in my opinion completely unjustified) the way they look after their employees is second to none and I retired from there with very happy memories. So looking back I think of the song which goes 'I don't know where am going but I definitely know where I have been.' From the memories of Malcolm Tipper, Penwortham.

Photo courtesy of Preston Digital Archive



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