

# The Preston Magazine



**Issue 18**

**April 2014**

**Sir Tom Finney**

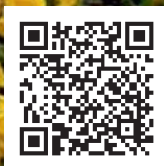
**Easter Celebrations 1893**

**War World I Diaries**

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## 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 dusty 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](mailto:prestondigitalarchive@hotmail.com)*
- 2. For the technically among us you can mail material to our local address. We will make copies and return them to you (at our cost) Our mailing address is as follows  
Preston Digital Archive, 121 Broad Oak Lane, Penwortham, Preston, PR1 0XA.  
Please remember to include a return address.*
- 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.*

*Regards from Barney - Preston Digital Archive*



# Welcome

Welcome to the 18th issue of The Preston Magazine, our free monthly magazine containing snippets of lesser-known history articles relating to Preston.

A big thankyou to our advertisers, without them we could not produce this magazine. Please support them whenever you can. If you would like to help us by advertising, please do contact us.

Our thanks to Penwortham Priory Academy for their help and support in the production of our magazine. A link on their website's community pages allows you to read all issues online, as well as our sister magazines, The Penwortham Magazine and The Lostock Hall Magazine. [www.priory.lancs.sch.uk](http://www.priory.lancs.sch.uk) you can also access The Preston Magazine via [www.blogpreston.co.uk](http://www.blogpreston.co.uk)

Included this month are Memories of Preston Shed by Robin Bamber, Memories by Alan Fazackerley, The Nurses Special by David Hindle MA, Sir Tom Finney by Denis Watson, the final part of Joshua's War by Sgt. J. Kelsall, a Preston soldier's diary of action in the trenches in WW1. We have also been allowed to publish the diary of James Green 305712, who also served in the Great War, our thanks go to Mrs Rita Finley for her permission to print her Uncle Jimmy's diary. As always our ongoing serial 'A Preston Lad' by Arthur Eric Crook (1917-1997).

**If anyone has any family memories, photographs or any items of trench art relating to the First World War that could feature in our magazine please do get in touch.**

Preston Historical Society next meeting is on Monday May 12<sup>th</sup>. 7.15, Preston Minster. 'The Films of Will Onda' Speaker Emma Heslewood.

Should you require a copy by post each month, please contact us. We can also email you a pdf version of the magazine.

**Please would you submit any memories, information or photographs that you would like to see included in the magazine. Contact details below.**

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.

Take a look at the Preston groups on Flickr, there are thousands of images, old and new. **Preston Digital Archive** – recently featured in the Lancashire Evening Post - is looking for old photos of Preston and surrounding area, please get in touch at the number below if you would like to contribute. We can scan any images for you and give you a digital copy.

A copy of each issue of all the magazines is kept at Lancashire Records Office.

**Front Cover Image – Miller Park, Preston by Heather Crook**

Regards

**Heather Crook**

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## **PLEASE SUPPORT OUR LOCAL ADVERTISERS**

The Preston Magazine accepts no responsibility for any transactions, goods or services, entered into with or provided by advertisers within these pages. We wish to apologise if any items cause offence, they relate to times gone by, and are not necessarily the views of the editor.

## Photographs from Preston Past



**Parkfield Labour Club F.C. 1973** Taken at Worden Park, Leyland. 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 1973

Back row – F. Walmsley, J. Eccleston, H.Kitchen, B. Sherliker, J. Kinsella, D. Malaney, P. Joyce, B. Zolartarcuk, R Atkinson, J. Pyle.

Front Row – G. Baron, F. Wilding, R. Morris, T. Billington. J. Welsby.



**Heysham Churchyard 2010**

Gravestone of Jane and Emily Nicholson Aged 26 and 20 of Preston  
Both teachers at Emmanuel Day and Sunday School

Both drowned at Fleetwood 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1886. The family lived at 54 Plungington Road.

Photo courtesy of Mr Derek Carwin.

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## Easter Celebrations 1893

Favoured by gloriously fine weather the Easter holidays were celebrated in Preston and neighbourhood with exceptional vigour. The mills generally ceased work on Thursday evening until Tuesday morning, although, through some endeavours which have been made to extend the holidays in the year there was no uniform stoppage in the town, but by next year it is almost certain that a virtual arrangement will be arrived at between employers and employed. Naturally, in many places the long strike in the cotton trade, the settlement of which was only determined a week or two ago, had a very depressing effect, but this was not experienced in Preston to any great degree. On Friday and Saturday large numbers of persons betook themselves to the seaside and country places, and the general opinion is that taken on the whole the Easter of 1893 has been the most enjoyable for many years. On Easter Sunday special services were held in the Preston churches and these were all well attended. On Monday the sun shone out brilliantly, and thus the one thing that was wanting to make the time-honoured egg rolling in Avenham and Moor parks a success were highly favourable. Early in the afternoon vast streams of children were seen in all directions of the town wending their way towards the parks. Here they enjoyed themselves in a most unmistakeable manner, the younger ones rolling eggs and oranges, whilst the older ones enjoyed themselves with skipping ropes &c. Both Avenham and Moor parks were literally crowded with pleasure seekers for about four hours, those on Avenham largely predominating. As usual, considerable pleasure was derived from boating on the river, but this method of enjoyment was not without its drawbacks, for as usual one or two collisions resulted in the occupants of the boats being precipitated into the water. These accidents however were fortunately not attended with any serious results, and save the inconvenience of the immersion the persons were very little the worse for their experience. In only one respect could the enjoyment of the concourse on the parks on Easter Monday be enhanced, and this is by the provision of a band, the discourses of which would be highly appreciated. No objection could be offered against this proposal, and it would afford great amusement to many thousands. The early trains on Monday morning brought large numbers of visitors in the town, most of whom visited the parks in the afternoon. The entertainment provided at the Theatre Royal for Easter has certainly proved an attractive one, and Mr Benson has further enhanced his excellent reputation as a Shakespearian actor. On Saturday and Monday evenings 'The Taming of the Shrew' was staged and on each occasion there were crowded audiences who frequently showed their appreciation of Mr Benson's abilities by their hearty rounds of applause. As usual there was this year a great exodus of people on Friday, Saturday and Monday, and in this respect holiday seekers appear to have been far more numerous than for many years. No doubt the beautiful weather was responsible for attracting people to the seaside.

Southport and Blackpool were most extensively patronised, indeed it is estimated that on no previous occasion has there been such an influx of visitors in Southport. This is perhaps owing to the most excellent railway facilities, three lines running into town, viz., the Lancashire and Yorkshire, the Cheshire lines and the West Lancashire. The number of excursionists conveyed from Preston were :- Blackpool, 4,800; Southport, 3,000; Morecambe, 800; Windermere, 600; and Ingleton, 200.

**Preston Chronicle 8 April  
1893**



*Crook's Boathouse c.1900. Courtesy of Preston Digital Archive*

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## Memories from Allan Fazackerley

I was driving down Brook Street recently and my old school, Emmanuel, now defunct, was on my left, so I turned into what used to be Hammond Street, the block between Brook Street and Greenbank Street. That is where I spent the first eighteen years of my life. I couldn't believe how short it now looked. The pavement of Greenbank Street is still there, and Brook Street is as was, but it looked so short, only a few newish houses either side. It was a football pitch length in my childhood and about fifteen homes either side. Now I've been back, I realise how narrow these 2 up and 2 down houses were. Just a back yard and outside loo, and my bathroom was hung on a nail on the wall. We lived at 75 and my Grandma Swan was next door at 74, so as we grew up my sister used to say goodnight and go next door ! But we were happy and seemed to have everything we needed. My mum's brother had the toffee shop on the corner, Mrs Howson, then Mrs Willis had the grocer's across the road, there was Dawson's chippy round the corner, and Farron's paper shop, and parched peas supplier just further down. Round the corner in Aqueduct Street was an open garage housing Post's Ice Cream, a rare treat in those days. Many of us used to frequent 'Grandad' Carlin's shop at the corner of Ellen Street. Never having the money for a full bottle of pop, Grandpa would sell it by the glass !

The corner behind him on Aqueduct Street was a big place that I now believe was an ex-pub. This bits my shame ! There was a strange bald headed man lived there in what was possibly a flat, and we used to chant 'Joe Baldie' outside till he chased us off. Not very PC was it ? The bottom block of Hammond Street through to Bold Street, for some reason we called 'the lodge'. It was unmade cinder and stones. The other end – the Bold Street end, was the territory of two brothers, one was called Seamus, and their gang. We used to hurl stones at each other for hours on end. Why, I have no idea, but we were very territorial, even kids in the next blocks, although possibly school friends, were allowed to play with us, only by appointment ! Most of our time was spent on 'The Rec' at the top of Greenbank Street. We spent many happy hours there, me and my best mate Ged Roach we used to sit on the Blackpool Road bridge and collect train numbers. The best bits were the troop trains, mainly Yanks, who would throw sweets etc to us. Good lads they were, but they had things !

If it rained we would stand inside the crush door shelter of the Empress Cinema till a train was heard, rush out, get its number, and rush back to the shelter. I'll never forget one train that was more beautiful than any other. It was Coronation Scot. Royal blue with white flashes down its sides. Also one big attraction of the Rec was that Tommy Finney had relatives at the top of Brook Street, and was occasionally spotted by speechless boys !

As I've said so often, we had total freedom back then. 'Be in before dark' was the rule, and as Moor Park and Haslam Park and even Ashton Park were in easy reach, there was no end of territory for kids. As we got older we had mammoth football games on Moor Park. We would start with 4 or 5 a side, the words 'any game' was uttered with monotonous regularity by passing lads, until who was on whose side nobody knew. You don't seem to see this these days, or am I not looking in the right places ?

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## PRESTON THEN AND NOW: 1843-1893 (NO. 2)

Just above Butler Street and on the opposite side of Fishergate, a roughly-paved road led down to a congeries of coal yards and offices, at the terminus of the Preston and Lancaster canal. A large area of waste ground on each side of that road was fenced off from Fishergate by a rickety wooden railing extending from near the corner house, now Wade's Bazaar, to the road in question. Nearly the whole of the ground occupied by the road and the coal yards has been taken up in the formation of that most convenient thoroughfare named Corporation-street, which puts the pedestrian in Fishergate nearer to Fylde-road by at least fifteen to twenty minutes walk. The extensive range of buildings known as Livesey and Toulmin's cheese warehouse, on the corner of Water-street West, was built about the same time as these great improvements were effected; and at some time after the handsome shops at this point of Fishergate and named respectively 'Queen's' and 'Victoria' buildings were erected. Under the east end of these buildings runs the present cart road to the goods department of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company. It is on the identical line of the old tramway, which was constructed eighty or ninety years ago to continue the traffic between the Preston and Lancaster canal and the Leeds and Liverpool canal, at the summit tunnel, near Bamber Bridge. Not a vestige of the old tramway is left within the town; but about half a mile up the Long Walk, on the south side of Tram Bridge over the Ribble may be seen some of the sleeper stones on which the railway were laid. The wagons were trained up and down the brow at Avenham by means of machinery in an engine house then standing on or about the spot now occupied by the Belvedere in Avenham Park. The chains attached to the wagon were worked from the engine-house round a horizontal wheel fixed in the upper part of an open shed standing in the centre of the tramway bridge. A drawing of the bridge and shed may be seen in the Free Library. In connection with that engine-house a very sad event happened a few years before its demolition. One Sunday morning some young men saw the head of a dead man sticking out upon the path from the trap-door of a coal-shoot of the engine-house, the face black from congestion, and the eyes starting from their sockets – a horrible sight. It was supposed that during the previous night, and probably in liquor, a man had determined to have a sleep in the engine-house, and that when sliding down the shoot, feet foremost, the heavy trap door had fallen, catching him by the neck and killing him instantly. About that time another strange event occurred on the tram-road. A old woman, having walked from Bamber Bridge, obtained from the man in charge of the wagons leave to ride up the brow and was put into the last wagon of the train. When it had reached near the top of the brow the chain broke, and down went the wagon at terrific speed. Half way across the bridge it left the rails and broke through the bridge fence, one half of it hanging over the river, which was in flood at the time. The old woman was rescued from her perilous predicament in an almost paralytic state of fright.

**Preston Chronicle 4 March 1893**



*Engine House and Incline, Avenham, 1869. Courtesy of Preston City Council*



*Tram Bridge c. 1864 – Courtesy of Preston Digital Archive*

# SIR TOM FINNEY

## AN APPRECIATION FROM A COUNCIL HOUSE KID

On Valentine's Day the greatest football legend amongst many football legends admired by my generation shuffled of this mortal coil to join the pantheon of his contemporaries in that great sporting auditorium in the sky. I was in the USA at the time but thanks to the modern communications of the internet I was able to read about the tributes to Tom Finney from the pens of sporting journalists to the opposable thumbs of those who inhabit the world of Twitter. At 91 Tom had a long and exceptional life as both a footballer and public figure and his passing has awakened in my contemporaries a host of emotions that have taken us back to the days when Preston North End were a force in English Football. It also awakened the debate about who was the greatest footballer of the Post War, Tom Finney or Stanley Matthews, for the last time. I began watching PNE during the war whilst Tom was fighting with the Eighth Army in the African Desert. My hero at that time was Andy McLaren who played in a forward line that contained the likes of Jimmy Dougal, Bobby Beattie and George Mutch the hero of the 1938 Cup Final. The team also comprised of Jack Fairbrother the goalkeeper and Bill Shankley. When Tom returned to civilian life and as a permanent member of PNE his exploits on the field began to grab the headlines on the sporting pages of national newspapers by the more discerning commentators such as Charlie Buchan. In Preston of course Walter Pilkington writing under the nom de plume of Viator went into more detail about Tom's control of the ball. The remainder of the Press and the FA establishment took a more ambivalent attitude towards his skills. They stuck with the players who had established themselves as internationals before the outbreak of hostilities. They couldn't ignore him much longer. By the end of the 1940's the upstart Finney became the subject of an article in the premier national photo journalist magazine of the time, the Picture Post. To appear on the front page of this magazine, the British equivalent of Life and Time magazines was a sign that the subject was at the pinnacle of his or her career. In this case, however, the title of the article was "Tom Finney the man who stops the game." The general tenet was that the best outside right of his or any other generation was denying the spectators of the pleasure of seeing a skilful fast flowing football match. Of course to the committed football supporter no matter which club they watched the opposite was true.

Here in the northwest in general but particularly in Preston and Blackpool the two giants of England's International forward line were the new comer at Preston and the "Wizard of Dribble" at Blackpool. Who was the best? Two of the best known sports commentators of the time Raymond Glendenning at the BBC and Henry Rose football columnist for the northern edition of the Daily Express. It was said of Rose who sadly died in the Munich Air crash that "his predictions were noted for being more consistently bold than accurate." Certainly as far as Finney was concerned neither of them believed he was as good as Matthews. Events came to a head when Walter Winterbottom persuaded that the two rivals could play in the forward line at the same time. Preston fans were ecstatic. On 25<sup>th</sup> May 1947 England played a strong Portuguese team in Lisbon. England won 10 nil with both Finney & Matthews scoring one each. The rest of the goals were scored by Tommy Lawton and Stan Mortenson who scored four each a testament to the crossing power of both wingers. On the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1950 England again played Portugal in Lisbon and the score this time was 5-3 with Tom scoring four and making the fifth for Stan Mortenson.

After that match an unknown Preston fan penned the following words that I recall from memory:-

*Great men are very rare*

*For instance, London's Lord Mayor, King Gustave of Sweden, Anthony Eden*

*And Britain's War Leader our Winnie,*

*But the greatest of all is the man with the ball*

*White shirt, blue knickers, Tom Finney*

*They still try to run down this man of renown  
But who do they give us instead  
A man who can't dribble he can't even use his head  
I think poor Stan would be better off dead  
At least that's what even Glendenning and Henry Rose said*

*Now the Portuguese players are agreed in their views,  
That a man who can dribble with both of his shoes  
Get the ball in the net with either foot is a Prince and the Pauper is Matthews*

Like all fans those of Blackpool, Stoke or Preston supporters at the time would accept that both players made an equal contribution to the pleasure of those who watched football in the immediate post war years. The imagined rivalry between the two players reported in the press who wrote that Finney did not get on with Matthews and vice versa ignited animosity between their fans. Both players commented about it in their autobiographies.

Tom wrote, *"Imagine how we both felt, continually reading in the newspapers of a so called feud between us. Stan and I shared a mutual respect and a close friendship and I can categorically refute all the rumours suggesting any kind of bad blood between us."*

Stan by the same token confirmed his admiration of Tom's prowess by writing *"To dictate the pace and the course of a game, a player has to be blessed with awesome qualities. Those who have accomplished it on a regular basis can be counted on the fingers of one hand, Pele, Maradona, Best, Di Stephano & Tom Finney."*

Let three of their contemporaries give an unbiased opinion.

Tommy Lawton: - *"Tom Finney always looks deadly serious, but his football has an impish character about it. Much of his footwork resembles that of Matthews, but Finney cuts in more than Matthews does, and is also a goal-scorer. Like Matthews, he has a tremendous burst of speed which helps him to float away from his pursuers."*

Matt Busby: - *"Stan Matthews was basically a right footed player, Tom Finney a left footed player, though Tom's right was as good as most players' better foot. Being naturally left footed Tom was absolutely devastating on the right wing. How can anyone say who was the greater? I think I would choose Matthews for the big occasion- he played as if he was playing the Palladium. I would choose Finney, the lesser showman but still a beautiful sight to see, for the greater impact on his team. For moments of magic – Matthews. For immense versatility – Finney. Coming down to an all-purpose selection about whom I would choose for my side if I could have one or the other I would choose Finney."*

Nat Lofthouse: - In his autobiography he wrote *"To compare Matthews and Finney is not really possible. They are entirely different in style. Whereas Tom Finney takes the ball no matter how it's sent to him, Stan prefers it direct to his feet. This quite naturally, limits a centre forward's distribution. Stanley does not like a centre forward to veer out on his beat, but as you may have noticed, he frequently draws opponents away from the centre forward then pushes over a really peachy pass. As another example of how different in style Matthews and Finney are, I must mention their centre and corner kicks. Finney hits the ball over hard and all it needs is a deflection to bring disappointment to a goalkeeper. Matthews' crosses, on the other hand, seems to float in the air. Goalkeepers, and other defenders, coming up against this unusual form of centre, are invariably caught in two minds. For the centre forward, it means a different approach must be made in heading the ball goal wards. With Matthews' centres I have to put my own power behind the ball; in other words, I try to KICK the ball with my forehead."*

For my part I still like to remember the poem even now in the winter of my years particularly as it brings back those halcyon Saturdays of my youth watching the legend that was Tom Finney take on and beat some of the best defenders in the game with the rest of my generation for the cost of 1/6d. By Denis Watson.

# MEMORIES OF THE FIRST ELEVEN YEARS OF A CAREER ON BRITISH RAILWAYS, INCLUDING LIGHTER MOMENTS (2) BY Robin Bamber

## LOCOMOTIVES

In 1957 the 10B compliment was as follows ...

40565 40694 (4-4-0's)

45096 45332 45454 45582 45633 (Stanier Black 5's and Jubilees 4-6-0's)

47008 (0-4-0) B.R. built Saddle tank

47291 47293 47319 47360 47413 47472 47659 (0-6-0's Jinties)

49104 49141 49150 49196 49382 49390 49391 49396 (0-8-0 Super D's)

78036 78037 (2-6-0's B.R. Standard Class)

The 4-4-0's piloted trains to Carlisle and Crewe, the 4-6-0's worked mainly passenger trains, and the 'Jinties' shunted Ribble Sidings, N.U. Yard and Dock Street, except for 47472, the only one fitted with screw reversing gear (which was unsuitable for shunting operations) which way the Preston Station pilot.

The Super D's worked heavy freights, and down the 1 in 29 Dock Branch. I could lie in bed a mile or so away during the night and hear a couple of them blasting up the incline to the Station, with the unmistakable uneven beat of their exhausts. The 2-6-0's worked the light passenger and freight trains. And the little B.R. 0-4-0 No. 47008 shunted the sharply curving Greenbank Sidings, a few hundred yards to the north, serving Goss Foster's works. It was quite a sight to see this little engine returning in the early afternoon, rocking and bouncing as it enjoyed a burst of speed on the main line before setting back onto the shed, with its driver and fireman hanging on for grim death ! The loco was known as the 'disposers' friend', as it arrived back on shed

having had its ashpan cleared and just a bucketful of fire in the grate. Earlier locos on the Greenbank shunt had been ex. LNWR 0-4-2 No. 47862m and 'Caley Pug' No. 56027, both of which ended up as Crewe Works shunters. When 47008 was away in Main Works, one of Fleetwood's 0-6-0 Dock Tanks No's 47160/66 was borrowed.



*'Preston MPD (24k) May 1958, 4-6-0 No. 45633 'Aden'  
Courtesy of Preston Digital Archive'*

## THE JOB

Routine planned maintenance was carried out at laid down intervals. The 'X' examination card listed work required, plus extra work as found by the Examiner. Also there were Drivers' repair cards with faults noticed whilst in service. Most of this work was carried out whilst the

engine was stopped for a boiler washout.

Running repairs on engines in steam were mainly carried out by Charlie Chuck and Topper. Charlie was approaching retirement age and had lost some confidence in his abilities, and if faced with a tricky or heavy job would sometimes approach an older apprentice, saying 'do this'n for us and I'll gi'thee ten Woodbines'. The lad would happily help out and accept the cigarettes.

Common jobs were leaking glands, injector faults, smokebox blows, brake adjustment and replacement of blocks, spring renewal, lubrication faults, sanding gear blockages, water scoop damage, and knocking motion bushes to be removed for re-metalling. One nasty job, usually given to an apprentice, was cleaning out a tender tank, swilling out all the mud, bits of coal and ballast, freshwater shrimps and occasional small fish, whilst working in cramped conditions.

A bigger job was the Valve and Piston exams and renewal of rings. This work included separation of the piston from the crosshead by removal of the large tapered crosshead cotter.

For this we needed the service of 'T big Ommer' a 7 or 14 lb long handled hammer, and a bar known as a 'dolly'. The base of the cotter was approached from the pit beneath the engine, and the 'dolly' held against it by one man whilst a second man struck it with the hammer.

My first attempt, with fitter Bill Hooper, was laughable. Bill held the bar in position and said 'Go on, have a go'. I held the hammer nervously half way down the shaft and struck two or three feeble blows, and one that just missed Bill's hand. He stood it for so long then roared 'Hit the ..... thing, don't waft yer cap at it – give me the ..... 'ommer, you hold the bar'. After half a dozen blows that shook the locomotive, 'Jubilee' No. 45633 'ADEN', the cotter flew out. It took me quite a while to become proficient with the 'Big 'Ommer' !

'Super D's' had a regular problem – they were prone to leaking cylinder cover joints. Fitters could tell from wheezing or loud groaning noises as an engine came on shed whether it was a front or back cover blowing. Front joints were easy, but back cover joints required the inside motion and slidebars dropping, a very dirty job. The engines were known as 'Wheezes' in parts of the Midlands !

Occasionally we would be called away from the Shed to go to the Station. A driver would report a fault on arrival there, and a fitter and apprentice would be sent, using the walkway next to Pitt Street wall. Every effort would be made to rectify the fault and let the train proceed, as a loco change created delays and operating problems.

Another time Stan Bretherton and myself were called down to the Docks. BR 2-6-0 No. 78036 was waiting to leave on a banana special, and had bursted a steam heating hose between the tender and the first 'Steam Banana' van. It was a half mile walk down to the Docks, carrying tools and the new hose. The repair was quickly effected and we were rewarded with a hand of bananas from the 'Geest' representative.

### **'THERE'S ONE ON !'**

This call, which spread like wildfire among the staff, signified a breakdown. Eager fitters, anticipating possible overtime, and the automatic allowance that was paid once the breakdown train was off Shed limits, gathered their gear together. The Steam Crane, which was stabled on the No. 1 road next to the main line, was prepared. Sailor Smith, the then regular driver, gassed up the fire, which was always kept burning. We apprentices hung around, hoping to be taken along. Usually an older, more experienced lad would be selected. My first breakdown experience was at the Bay Horse, 15 miles north of Preston, where a loaded mineral wagon in an unfitted (ie. Not continuously braked) Down freight train had sheared the rear axle. The rear of the wagon had dropped breaking the coupling to the following wagon, and the divided train had gone on for some distance, with the wagon damaging the sleepers and throwing ballast about. We approached the incident on the Up line and deposited the offending wagon down the embankment for later disposal, in order to get traffic moving again. I learnt a lot from assisting the fitters in attaching slings and chains to the wagon, and the expertise of Sailor in the crane cab, calmly operating the controls, all a lesson in how things should be done..... To be continued next month.

## Diary of James Green 305712

### 8<sup>th</sup> King's Liverpool Regt.

#### B.E.F. France

#### 1914-1918

**Part Two** - Got word that my brother William had been wounded at 'La Basse'. 9<sup>th</sup> May.

Had a short rest then went on to 'Vieille-Chappelle' May 1915.

Went into some reserve trenches behind the front line at 'Windy Corner'. We are in the war now. Shells all around and, overhead, shrapnel bursting, cloth caps are no protection against it. Behind the trench there were about half a battalion of the 'Worcestershire Regiment' buried. I and my three mates were lugging the heavy machine gun and the ammunition belts up. It was dark we hardly knew where we were going but we had a guide from the battalion we were relieving to show us the way.

We were ploughing through the shell holes and stuck up with the mud, we were fed up to the teeth. We came to a ditch and had to cross on a narrow plank, machine gun fire was sweeping across it at intervals, we sat down on it for a few minutes rest we were fagged out. An officer came up and ordered us on, we were lucky.

We arrived at the trenches and started to make our way through the mud and water to the front line to relieve the 'King's Own Reg.', we had a few casualties going in. The trenches were in a terrible state broken down by shell fire, the stink of dead bodies was terrible. In places the trench wall was patched up with bodies from an Indian Regiment that had been in before. They were built in with the sand bags, arms and legs were sticking out all over the place they just snapped off as you brushed past them. The smell of death and decay was everywhere. We took over and settled down.

A shell from one of our own guns fell short and killed 13 of the men we were relieving. Shrapnel shells were always bursting overhead and head wounds were pretty serious. Sometimes the gas alarm would be sounded, we then had to get our respirators out of a bag we had round our necks, it was a piece of muslin and inside was a piece of cotton wool rolled tight, you then had to soak it in a bucket of urine in the corner of the trench and put it over your nose and mouth. That was the only protection we had against the gas. One night we were ordered to start an advance trench so we could get a little nearer to the Germans for when we made an advance. Dixon, Clough, Thompson and myself were in the first files going out front. We got cut off from the others by machine gun fire and we had to lie low for a couple of hours until it had died down. We worked harder in those few hours than we had ever worked in our lives to get some cover as the Germans started to put over a heavy barrage to stop us working. I for one was glad to go out next day to finish it. They had a few losses. We got relieved by the '2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion The Gordons', a fine lot. We went out for a rest behind the lines at a village called 'Locon'. We had a quiet time.

We packed up and went in the trenches at 'Festubert', worse than all the others. It took us hours to make our way to the communication trench and up to the front line through mud and water. You can see the troops you are relieving are in a hurry to get out before they



get killed. It doesn't matter about the ones that are relieving them, that's the luck of the war. The churchyard and the graveyard have been ploughed up with shell fire you can see some of the occupants of the graves exposed to view, it is a gruesome sight. There is a large cross standing all alone amongst the ruins; it looks like some kind of omen. The village was in complete ruin. It was there that the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion of 'The Kings Own' were trapped on the barbed wire and slaughtered.

We relieved the '1<sup>st</sup> Scottish Rifles'. We had a rough time in the trenches, nothing to eat or drink for two days we could not get any rations up for shell fire. We were up to the knees in mud and water, we had to wear gun boots that came up to our waist and fastened round our necks with straps to hold them up. Every night we had to rub our feet with whale oil, the officer and sergeant came to inspect them, it was to prevent 'trench feet' and frostbite. If you got that your feet fell off. We had no dugouts and it rained continually for four days, (oh, what a lovely war).

One of my mates, Billy Dixon, had a serious bout of coughing he just couldn't get his breath and was choking through the fumes and smell. We got him to the First Aid Post and he was sent down the line. We heard afterwards that he had been sent back to England and had been discharged. He is out of the army now, and the war, good old Bill he was always a comic.

One morning, while it was quiet, we got out of the trench looking for survivors. Fritz opened up on us with machine gun fire but we got back safe. At 'Festubert' Thompson and me had a narrow escape, we were looking over the top and kidding Fritz, we just got down in time as he sent a lot of whiz-bangs over; they are deadly things you don't hear them coming till they burst among you and they do a lot of damage.

George Clough and me volunteered to go down and try and get some rations up to our platoon. We made our way down the communication trench to headquarters. The quartermaster gave us a good feed and loaded us up with bully beef and biscuits. We got relieved by the 'Scottish Rifles', had a few more casualties coming out. We passed two cart-loads of dead Germans, they had not been buried. The Colonel and the Captain got the wind up when we came out of the trenches at 'Richebourg' and went home to England, we did not see them again. We went to rest in a village behind, later on we moved up to some trenches near 'Festubert'. The rest we get when we come out of the line consists of going back up the line carrying sandbags, barbed wire and mortar shells to the engineers and sappers also duck boards to put down in the trenches so you are not walking in water. You get them kind of jobs nearly every night all for a 1/- a day and I allow half of that home to my father. He gets 7/6d a week.

The big attack started on June 14<sup>th</sup> 1915.

We were standing by for it, we did not expect to be in it but the 'North Lancs' could not hold on so we were rushed up in fighting order; three battalions had been cut up that afternoon. It was hard going up that road, shells bursting overhead, wounded streaming down. It's not a nice feeling when you're going up to do the same thing.

I got wounded soon after from a bursting shell. I was lucky. As I lay wounded (it was in the knee) my two chums, Thompson and Clough, were bandaging me up but the officer came up and sent them up the line. He was a windy officer. I believe he went back to England shell shocked. While I lay on the road I saw young Billy Rampling from Queen St (my home street) coming down wounded. He belonged to the 'North Lancs'. He helped me down to the First Aid Dressing Station and we got down safe enough. I met Tommy Horsefield from Preston, he was crying, he was badly shell shocked he said he had been buried by a shell. He was sent back up the line again. I heard later that he had been killed on the 'Somme'.

Continued next month .....

# The Nurse's Special – A Music Hall conundrum

*By David John Hindle MA*

The Whittingham Hospital Railway (WHR) line was constructed between 1887/89 to convey coal and provisions to the new hospital linking it with the joint London North Western and Lancashire Yorkshire's Preston to Longridge branch line at Grimsargh. Passengers soon followed and private stations were built at either end of the almost two mile long standard gauge line. The hospital was built in a rural locality about eight miles north east of Preston and about two miles from Grimsargh (formerly Grimsargh with Brockholes). The hospital railway was originally built to solve a Victorian conundrum – how to connect a remote and rural hospital establishment with the outside world in order to solve the hospital's supply problems with coal and provisions. The answer to this enigma was to build a private railway and for almost seventy years a quaint and diminutive train slowly crossed over the level crossing at in front of Whittingham St Luke's main hospital building providing a somewhat surreal encounter for patients and visitors alike. Undoubtedly unique, it claimed to be the only free passenger railway in the world. Even before the dawn of railway preservation the line was well known to enthusiasts for its archaic locomotives and rolling stock. The railway's heritage was, somewhat surprisingly, even extended far beyond the shores of England. In fact, long before the days of the internet, the railways inimitable characteristics were being acclaimed in San Francisco, North America. Indeed the tranquil railway scene between Grimsargh and Whittingham saw minimal change for almost seventy years. Thus who could resist boarding the train at Grimsargh's quaint branch line station for a free ride to Whittingham on this Victorian relic to discover its quirky features ?

Features of the WHR and an encounter with a certain 'James Fryars'  
The spotlight now turns to my own lasting impressions of a journey along the line c 1953 when Grandad Bowman first introduced me to the delights of the Whittingham line. I was fortunate to know Grimsargh in those halcyon days when the main Longsight Lane (now Preston Road) was obstructed twice a day by the level crossing gates. As a tired 'Aspinall' ex LYR 0-6-0 steam engine on the Longridge branch prepared to show its true colours in tackling the ascent to Longridge, a quaint veteran locomotive with a combination of up to three green passenger carriages, bearing an uncanny resemblance to horse boxes, gently simmered in Grimsargh's second railway station. During its sixty eight year existence the steam locomotives and stock operating on the totally eccentric Whittingham



railway made the veteran steam locomotives on the neighbouring line look like today's equivalent of 'Eurostar'.

On arrival at Grimsargh station we discovered that the entire operational staff on the railway comprised only two separate teams of drivers and firemen. Hence there was no ticket office and anyone could travel. All they provided at Grimsargh was the waiting room, complete with a roaring coal fire and a single electric light bulb. It was rather like the 'Marie Celeste', a ghost station with no staff. Beneath considerable smoke emissions an ancient steam engine suddenly appeared around the curve close to Dixon's farm. As the apparition drew nearer, along rails deeply submerged in a weedy single-track, the sight and sound of steam was perceived with a sense of yearning and nostalgia. Upon arrival and after running round its train I stood in awe at the sight of a truly antiquated steam engine named 'James Fryars' and witnessed the early shift of hospital workers slamming the doors of the three green carriages, which had been converted from LNWR guards vans by the hospital's joiners. The kindly engine crew allowed me on the footplate to look at the controls of the impressive steam engine and the fire at the heart of the clapped out old veteran, affectionately known by them as 'Jimmy Fryar'.

To my astonishment fireman Bennett produced a coal shove, which was placed above the roaring fire to fry bacon, eggs and field mushrooms for breakfast, washed down with tea from the driver's 'billy' can. I am not too sure about the coal dust, but giant field mushrooms on toast, washed down with tea out of the driver's billy can tasted delicious, but even at that age I took the view that if germs can survive such an ordeal they almost deserve to poison you ! A lunch menu of tripe and trotters awaited the crew on the driver's seat. I was informed it was to be dowsed down with vinegar and pepper, understandably so, for the uninitiated the tripe would have once lined a cow's belly, while the trotters originated from the edible (or inedible) parts of a pig's foot ! Thanks' but no thanks ! I pondered that micheivous propensity once got the better of me and led to the innocuous alteration of the chalked words 'tripe and trotters' displayed on a local shop window, which left the poor shopkeeper proudly advertising 'ripe-rotters'. Needless to say, we little urchins ran for it but no damage was done and I survived the ordeal.

To be continued next month.

## JOSHUA'S WAR by Sgt. J. Kelsall

### A Preston soldier's diary of action in the trenches of WW1

Oct 22<sup>nd</sup> Thursday: A wounded German who we brought in tells us that out of his party of 200, 60 were killed before they made the final assault. The remainder of the day we were shelled at intervals.

On Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> Oct. We were bombarded practically all day. At 4.30 the shells seemed to explode around us like a 'fue de joie' as fired by the rifle.

On Sat. 24<sup>th</sup> 4 am, a Battalion on Yorkshire Light Infantry relieved us in our trench. We were not sorry as it gets monotonous after a few days. We were in a most dangerous predicament as we were marching to our billet when the enemy opened fire on us from the other side of the line. We dropped on our stomachs all at once. They kept up the fire for a full half hour, the bullets seemed to miss us by hairsbreadths. We had one man wounded in his arm.

Altogether a miraculous escape for the lot of us as we had absolutely no cover. Landed billet at 5 am. We are now resting.

5 pm: Our rest has come to a sudden stop. A tremendous attack in progress on our right, so we were ordered back into the firing line at 7 pm. We found we were not required as our lads had beaten the enemy off with enormous losses. We billeted for the night in a row of cottages within handy distance of the support trenches.

Sunday Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>: Took up position behind the firing line where we dug ourselves in. Had just finished (lost Sgt. Willet) and were making ready for a nights rest when we were relieved by the West and were making ready for a nights rest when we were relieved by the West Yorks who had been resting while we dug trenches for them. They got our prayers. We had no sooner moved out than it started to rain in torrents. We spent a weary 2 hours by the roadside awaiting orders.

We moved into the firing line at 1 o'clock am when we had to start making trenches for ourselves. It rained in torrents all the time. When morning broke we found the enemy had been doing the same. We were 400 yards apart and started sniping each other. The enemy fired very little at us with their big guns as we were too close. They might have hit their own, though our artillery risk a few at their trench they are far more accurate in the shooting.



Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> 5pm. Hell of a racket on our left. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division seem to be 'in it'. There's some dirty work going on from what we can hear. Beyond sniping, our front is calm.

8 pm: All the right is in action. Our lads evidently awakened to the fact of the date – 'fireworks' everywhere. We stood to arms practically all night but fired very little in my Company. In a splendid position – probably accounts for our not being attacked – couldn't half mow them down if they did.

6<sup>th</sup> Nov: We're in the land of plenty just here. The farmyard stock is plentiful but it will not last long – pals are getting too greedy. Not content with one good feed, 'Casely and Co' must bring 27 chickens from my own 'Newfoundout' farm ¼ of a mile away. He must have followed me the other night. The trench now resembles a poulterer's shop at Xmas. We have tons of spuds, turnips, leeks, cabbages and beans to go at just behind. It is dangerous the getting but the 'bellygladness' is worth it.

General ..... complimented our platoon on their commissariat, 'That's the style men, use plenty of greens' – hardly necessary – the boys will get them without compliments. Our officers don't go short either.

Notice Casely dropped a couple of chickens near their dugout and Sumner is busy with a pig destined for the same 'hotel'. I've been promised a few spare parts. Sumner is up for a promotion.

Nought but a bit of 'wind up' last night. On being relieved from 'sentry go' this morning, Maskell and myself went foraging. Maskell found a pig's head and about 12 lb of decent pork in two pots which the Sumner gang had hurriedly left the night before when the Germans began to get busy. Sumner and Co. are looking for their pork. Maskell says the pork gave him indigestion, Phew ! he can't half shift it !

Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>: I got orders to proceed to Headquarters for a much needed bath. While there I asked for a pass to Armentiers to buy a few thing the boys needed. Had heard the town had been blown to smithereens. It has been knocked about a bit but is far from being as bad as reported.

Got a daily, but things on the whole are rather slack – no fighting at all. One keeps in practice by sniping. Our officers at first forbade this, till things got too hot. We were losing men every day. At last permission was given to retaliate in kind. After a few days it required an eagle's perception to detect a finger on the German trench. We gave them no respite now. Company 'D' trenches and the enemy's are only 80 yards apart. They are on speaking terms. There are about a dozen heaps in front – once living Germans. One is an officer by the appearance of his equipment.

**Recorded by Sergeant Joshua Kelsall, Rifle Brigade, of Preston. 'By kind permission of Mrs Freda Howarth and LRO, Bow Lane, Preston. Ref: DDX2084/1**

Here the diary joins up with the piece that was printed in the December issue.

## A Preston Lad

A wonderful thing did happen to me once. One Saturday afternoon a man presented himself and was closeted in the sitting room with Miss Hall for a while, then she called me in and introduced me to him. It was Mr Thornley. The man who lived at our house in Dewhurst Row. He had managed to trace me. He embarrassed me by hugging and kissing me. Being devoid of any love, of any sort of affection it seemed a bit alien to me. After that he came every Saturday afternoon and stayed for about two hours. He was now living in Leyland. All this occurred about February and in late April he asked if I would like to stay at his house for the weekend, Friday night till Monday. These few days or the weekend happened to be when the Leyland May Festival was held. I had heard of it and knew it was a very special and spectacular event in the village life of Leyland. The May Festival was known all over Lancashire and all and sundry took part in preparing for the event. On the Sunday he would be taking me to Chorley to see my foster mother, who was a long stay patient in Eaves Lane Hospital. The offer took my breath away. I could not believe it. Me. Who had forgotten what kindness was, almost, and was inured and practically institutionalised in my present environment. It was better than when I stayed in Sharoe Green Hospital due to a bad case of measles. A whole fortnight I spent there being made a fuss of by all the nurses. To be away from the Home for three whole days and be absolved from the strict regime that was mine and all the other children's lot. With shining eyes I gulped and said 'Yes, please!' Then I did something I never did and kissed a grown up adult. He had already discussed it with Miss Hall, and was told she could not give permission, which rested with the authorities, Mr Thornley must have got it because arrangements were made. I was to go next Friday afternoon, after tea. I bet Miss Hall was livid, her pet hate getting something none of the other kids had ever had a chance of. She got a few snide remarks in, like, 'The Devil looks after his own' and 'You'll get your come uppance etc' and ironically a few months later I did. But that was in the unforeseeable future and at present I was happier that I had been since that fateful night Ma Brown had collapsed. Somebody cared, for me, Eric Crook, the lonely in heart, who nobody had cared for since I was brought here. Someone who came to see me every week, brought me sweets, although I had to share them with the rest of the boys, took me for walks and took the trouble to actually talk to me. Miss Hall had a bit of a down on him. I heard her say to Miss Taylor, 'He drinks! I could smell his breath'. Actually he called at the Lamb Hotel and had a pint before he came. Anyone who partook of the demon drink were not up to much in her estimation. Not without reason I supposed, the tales she told us about drunken husbands who cause a lot of suffering to their wives and children. At times she kept us hours listening to tales about Manchester Road, Library Street and the back of the old church. Starving kids and drunken dads. You ought to think yourself lucky to have a place that this to live in. I suppose she had a point, at least we were well nourished, had clean clothes and a clean bed, and if we were not god fearing we ought to be. Anyway – lets hark back to this period in my life when an aura of happiness and wellbeing pervaded. Even Miss Hall wasn't too bad under these circumstances. The week eventually passed and it was suddenly Friday. A good wash and I dressed in my Sunday suit. I waited impatiently for Mr Thornley to come, he arrived about 7.15, after Miss Hall had told me to speak only when spoken to, don't sniffle use your handkerchief, and to say 'yes please' and 'no thankyou' when the occasion arose. 'Yes Ma' I replied, pronounced as the letter M, the little m and off

we went. I was clutching the cloth bag which contained my nightie, hankies and change of socks. We caught the tram on New Hall Lane to the Parish Church, then to the Ribble bus station and caught the bus to Leyland. Mr Thornley gave me eight pence and told me to ask the conductor for one and a half to the Regent in Hough Lane. I felt quite grown up and kept those two bus tickets for months. The bus ride took about half an hour, Mr Thornley lived right across the road from the bus stop. Number 7 Hough Lane, Wellington Terrace, I think. In we went and his housekeeper had some supper ready for me, a few biscuits and a glass of warm milk. I stayed up till nine and then went up to bed. I was tired, but too excited to sleep, about ten o'clock Mr Thornley Junior, Walter, came in and bounded straight up the stairs to see if I was awake. We spoke for a while, but he could see I was tired so he said he would play me to sleep on the piano. It worked I was soon fast asleep. My benefactor came to bed later, I was sharing his bed. Unknown to me another visitor had arrived with Walter, his niece. A girl about my own age. She crashed into our bedroom about seven o'clock shouting 'Morning Grandad !' and promptly ensconced herself between the two of us. I was shocked, double shocked when she pulled back the bedclothes. I noticed that Mr Thornley was sleeping in his Long Johns, no nightie or pyjamas. Just these hideous things that covered him from neck to toe. I had never seen such items of underclothes and for some reason found myself embarrassed. Though not as embarrassed as finding myself in bed next to a girl in a frilly nightie. 'So, you're Eric, I think I am going to like you'. I went bright red and turned my face to the wall. 'don't be bad mannered' she said, and pulled me on my back. 'Don't be shy' she teased. I couldn't speak and just stared at this apparition with the Clara Bow hairstyle and big brown eyes. I'd never seen such big eyes in all my life. Mr Thornley had to be at work for half past seven. He was employed at Leyland Motors, about fifty yards from his house, North Works it was called. He got out of bed and started to get dressed, he kept his long johns on so there was no embarrassment. When dressed he said 'Your breakfast will be ready in half an hour, send young buggerlugs down when you want to get dressed.'

She just pulled my nose and followed her Grandad down the stairs. After breakfast the housekeeper told Kathleen, that was the name of this most intriguing young person, to show me round the village centre. It was a beautiful morning so off we sallied. A quick look in the Co-op window then we turned right down School Lane, down the hill, crossed the road and wandered onto a building site. All the foundations of what would be Yewlands Avenue and Yewlands Drive were being built. We ran and jumped from one wall to another, when I lost my footing and gashed my knee. Kathleen was all concerned. I would have liked to have had a good yell, but I couldn't in her presence. She wiped away the blood with her own hankie then fastened mine round the injured part. We sat upon the wall, which would one day be somebody's front window. I limped around and refused to go back to the house. By dinnertime I was hopelessly in love with my fascinating companion. About 11.45 we had to go to Stopford's for meat and potato pies for a quick dinner. Mr Thornley finished work at 11.30. By that time Leyland was getting quite congested with the influx of visitors from Preston, Chorley, Bamber Bridge and all outlying districts. People even came from Bolton and such far off places to witness the May festival.

More next month ..... By Arthur Eric Crook (1917-1997)

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# Youngest Person In The World To Create Fusion



Jamie Edwards, year 9, C7 is the youngest person in the world to build a nuclear fusion reactor.

Penwortham Priory Academy pupil Jamie Edwards, 13, has built the reactor from scratch, with help from his Preston school, and has now taken the world record off American Taylor Wilson, who was 14 when he became the youngest 'fusioneer' in 2008.

Jamie began building the reactor in October in a under-used science laboratory at Priory and finally completed the task on Wednesday (March 5), making two atoms of hydrogen smash together to make helium – a nuclear fusion.

"It is quite an achievement," said Jamie, who was in a race against time to make the reactor before he turned 14 on March 9.

Find us on



"It's magnificent really. I can't quite believe it – even though all my friends think I am mad!"

Jamie has always had a taste for science and used to try and do his older brother Danny's science homework.

"When I was in primary school, I was always reading Danny's science homework – he was at Priory at the time - and I just really enjoyed it," said Jamie.

"One day, I was looking on the internet for radiation or other aspects of nuclear energy and I came across Taylor Wilson and his reactor.

"I looked at it, thought 'that looks cool' and decided to have a go. Basically I made a star in a jar. It's amazing really, quite a feat, to be from Penwortham and be the youngest person in the world to do this." [www.priory.lancs.sch.uk](http://www.priory.lancs.sch.uk)

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