

# The Preston Magazine



Issue 23

**Preston Station Buffet**

**A Preston Lad**

**Eastertide 1905**

**FREE**

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# Welcome

Welcome to the 23rd 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 and Penwortham Magazines via [www.blogpreston.co.uk](http://www.blogpreston.co.uk)

Included this month are – A Poem from Preston born Canadian poet Robert Service, from his book of poems entitled Rhymes of a Red Cross Man, which was dedicated to his brother, Albert, who was killed in action, in France in August 1916, Memories of Preston Shed by Robin Bamber, Part 6 of the diary of James Green 305712, who 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). Old articles about Easter in Preston 1905 and The Sailors and Soldiers Free Buffet on Preston Station.

## **LANCASHIRE ARCHIVES ARE CELEBRATING THEIR 75TH ANNIVERSARY IN APRIL – SEE OPPOSITE PAGE**

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. Also if any of your family members are named on a Preston or South Ribble War Memorial and you have any information about them we would love to hear from you.

Should you require a copy by post each month, please contact us. We can also email you a pdf version of the magazine. If I have missed you lately please do let me know. 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 – is always on the look out 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 will be kept at Lancashire Records Office.

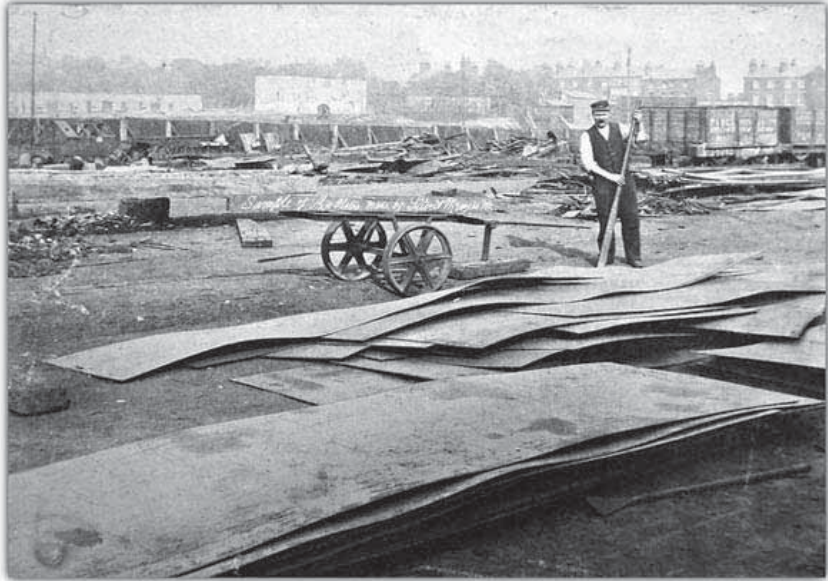
**Front Cover Image – Preston Town Hall by Trista McNaught, Age 11, Year 7, Penwortham Priory Academy**

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# PHOTOGRAPHS FROM PRESTON PAST



Strand Road, Preston, c.1900 Photograph of what is believed to be the triangular piece of ground occupying the north east corner of Strand Road and Fishergate Hill. The land was then being used as a storage area for materials used in William Allsup's foundry and shipyard. Chalked on the handcart are the words "Sample of Ship Plates made by Stewert and Menzies." Also seen in the background is the boundary fence for the Ribble Branch Railway together with a glimpse of the west portal of the tunnel that runs below Fishergate Hill. Preston Digital Archive



Emmanuel Church Post Card c. 1915  
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## Eastertide – Egg Rolling in Preston 1905

The first general holiday in Preston cannot be regarded as a success. People have a right to expect a little warmth at the latter end of April, but instead we have hail and snow and keen searching winds to keep these unwelcome visitors company. The only consoling feature in this extraordinary combination of weather is in the fact that prediction of the meteorological authorities is being fulfilled with aggravating accuracy. What, however, is food for the meteorologist is in this instance exceedingly unfortunate for the holidaymaker, and thus it is that, with perhaps one of the coldest Eastertides on record, people are preferring the fireside to facing intermittent snowstorms and harsh winds. Throughout the Preston district Eastertide as so far passed off very quietly, and the police records reveal nothing unusual in the nature of accidents. With the sun occasionally making its appearance on Sunday, motorists, cyclists and waggonette parties took to the roads and chancing the weather did their best to enjoy themselves. Today, however, the tripping element was by no means strikingly evident early on, but in a large measure this was due to the great egg rolling festival, which fascinates both old and young and keeps them at home. Excursions are being run to the seaside resorts, but the day trips to Blackpool have not been very liberally patronised. On the other hand, Southport has received its fair representation of Prestonians, while Brock and other picturesque districts in the neighbourhood have not been neglected. Egg Rolling on Easter Monday in Avenham Park has been observed this afternoon by the youngsters of this town with all the thoroughness that has marked the practice in former years. Though the juveniles of Preston cling to this custom with pardonable tenacity they can claim no monopoly of the survival of pace-eggs for in different parts of the world the pastime is still followed and we are told that this afternoon there was to be an egg rolling competition in the grounds of the White House at Washington. But at Preston the survival of the quaint custom is marked by greater vitality than elsewhere, and the explanation of this no doubt is that the proud town is favoured with a more perfect arena for the frolics of the children than any other town. No finer spot could be wished for than the magnificent amphitheatre nature has provided in Avenham Park. Many must have been the expressions of regret this morning when the festival was threatened to be spoiled by the rain and hail, however, a drying wind and more or less unclouded sun held sway as the day wore on, and the grass was sufficiently dried by midday to the fears of the most careful of mothers. By two o'clock the children were swarming on to the park in thousands, and gradually the greensward was obliterated by the surging mass of juvenility. The approaches to the park were thick with stalls containing sweets, oranges and coloured eggs, but most of the revellers had come prepared. Well filled handkerchiefs bulging with eggs and oranges showed they were equipped. The eggs had been hard boiled and dyed with all colours imaginable. The children lost no time in rolling and as they became broken their contents were quickly devoured, the shells and orange peel littering the grass in weird variegation. There must have been some 20,000 or 30,000 children present in the middle of the afternoon, and the wonderful sight graced by the brilliant sunshine, attracted large crowds of spectators, who watched the youngsters at play from the surrounding terraces. The slopes of the 'valley' were a particular attraction to the children, who tossed their eggs and oranges up the banks, catching them as they came back and gleefully scampering after them when they rolled away to the level of the park. Many rolled their eggs at one another's till one was broken and became the spoil of the contest. Others played at catches with their oranges or balls; both boys and girls were skipping and jumping was the pleasure of others. Here and there could be seen a fond father tossing an orange to a tot too small to play with the others. Oranges and eggs mysteriously disappeared as the afternoon wore on, auguring pain and woe to many a little digestion. But counsels of caution were unavailing and heavy must have been the anticipatory sacrifices to the goddess of fun and frolic. The great picnic was in every way a success, passing off with the maximum enjoyment to both young and old. A large staff of police took a passive part in proceedings, being ready to take into charge any lost children with the view of restoring them to their parents. Mr Tye and his assistants were also present to exercise an eye of superintendence.

**Lancashire Daily Post April 24th 1905**

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Goodwin Brothers Umbrella Shop, Orchard Street c.1980.  
Courtesy of Beth Heyes, Preston Historical Society.



Preston North End FC 1904 Courtesy of Preston Digital Archive





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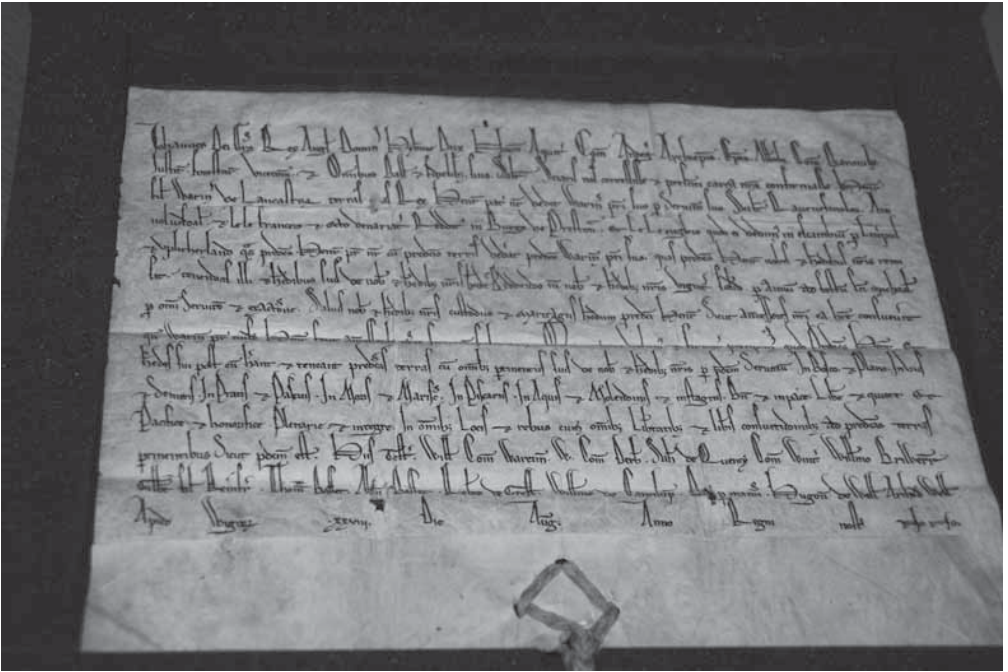


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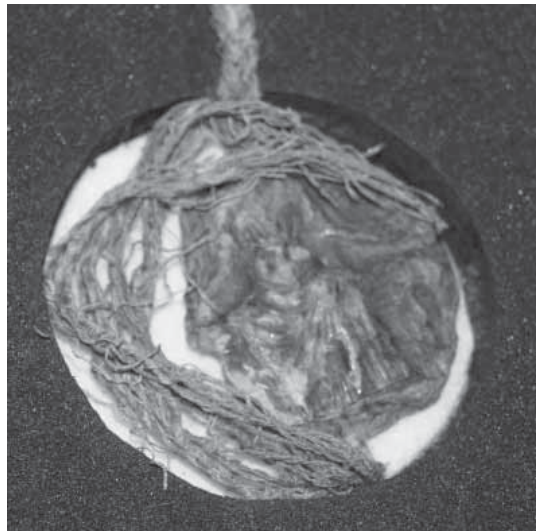
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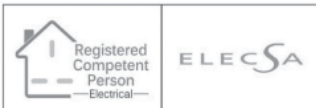
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# **MEMORIES OF THE FIRST ELEVEN YEARS OF A CAREER ON BRITISH RAILWAYS, INCLUDING LIGHTER MOMENTS BY ROBIN BAMBER**

**ROYAL TRAINS** – On four or five occasions I was called upon by prior arrangement to attend to the passage of a Royal Train. These ran under the special codes of 'DEEPE' and 'GROVE' (named after Railway H.Q.'s during the war). 'DEEPE' was for the Queen, and 'GROVE' for lesser members of Royalty. My involvement was to be on site at the water troughs at Brock, and ensure that they were full for the engine to pick up its supply, so that no unscheduled stop would be required for water. I'd make sure that the trough was full to overflowing to make guarantee a good pick up, then wait by the lineside until the train had passed. These trains usually passed Brock between 11pm and 2am. On one occasion I was in the valve house adjacent to Badger Bridge, at the north end of the troughs when I was apprehended by a Railway Policeman who had seen my torch moving about as he stood on the bridge. He came down to check that I wasn't up to no good, and we had a laugh and watched the Special pass together. After my first visit, by taxi, and problems with getting another one to take me home, I decided in future to use my bike. This was a round trip of some 20 miles or so from Lostock Hall. I doubt anybody nowadays would do that, with all their tools in the saddlebag.

**TRAINING COURSES** – I remember attending Crewe Works Boiler Shop for three days instruction in Oxy acetylene cutting and welding. Also a two day visit to Blackburn Bolton Rd Goods Depot, where an Inspector taught a group of us 'KINETIC LIFTING' procedures, including how tip and more 45 gallon loaded oil drums. He wasn't much taller than a drum himself but he made it all look so easy. And I attended a one week course at Horwich Works on maintenance of track tamping Machines, held in the Millwright's Shop there, under the watchful eye of Foreman Jake Cartwright. During the mid 1960's a new system of track laying was introduced using single line gantries, which only occupied the one track, as opposed to the usual machine which occupied both tracks. The new units were supplied by the French firm of 'SECMAFER', and the prototype unit was put on test on the disused line from Chester to Whitchurch, at Grindley Brook. Staff attended for one week, travelling daily. Under the supervision of a Technical Officer from Derby we familiarised ourselves with the machine and any likely problems. The work site overlooked a staircase of locks on the Llangollen Canal, and lunch was taken at a canalside pub whilst watching the boats locking up and down, all very pleasurable ! I travelled down with a fitter from Accrington and as we passed through Warrington I told him to look east towards Arpley, and the big Seed Warehouse there with the name 'GARTONS' on the roof in large letters. This had amused we trainspotters for years, as spelt backwards it produced an interesting word ! Tiny minds, I know .... !!!

In 1965, Jack Bardo was appointed Mechanical Supervisor, and I took his place as Examiner. There was a small rise in pay, very welcome. It also led to occasional Supervisory experience, as I took over from Jack during holidays and sickness, etc., which stood me in good stead for the future.

**CHARACTERS** – Amongst characters met during the 60's, one was Big Dennis from Walsall, operator on a 'MATISA' Ballast Cleaner. A huge man, of sometime foul temper, Dennis was never at his best at the commencement of work when the machine's cutter bar was being connected under the sleepers prior to removal of track ballast. Jobs usually commenced late on a Saturday evening, and Dennis usually had a shandy or two beforehand. Woe betide anyone who crossed him. Ballast Cleaners travelled the length of the region, and had a travelling coach with them, containing sleeping and messing facilities, as the operators were often too far from their home station to travel daily to sites of work.

During the week, whilst P & M staff were carrying out maintenance and repairs in a siding, one could be invited into the coach at lunchtime, if one was 'well in' ! I always got on well with Dennis, and once, when stabled in a siding at Euxton Junction, I was allowed in and asked in Dennis's Black Country twang, 'Would you loike some stoo, boy ?' He referred to the large cast iron pot of stew, simmering away on his coal stove. 'Yes, please' I said as it smelt good. I really enjoyed that stew, despite Dennis's mate Taff grimacing at me and shaking his head behind Dennis's back. Taff told me later 'That pot never empties, boyo, he just chucks more meat and veg in every week'. I'm sure the tale was an exaggeration, but I politely declined the next offer of 'stoo'! Another time, in Maudland Siding, on the Blackpool line, Dennis disappeared to the local shop on Fylde Rd and came back with a pack of six kipper fillets, a half pound of butter and a small loaf. The block of butter went into his huge black frying pan, followed by the kippers, and Dennis sat and ate the lot direct from the pan, mopping up all the butter with the bread. Then there was Dick Ireland, Ballast Tamper Operator. I first met him when he appeared in the workshop at Butler St, with a dismantled 'Matisa' cone clutch assembly in a cardboard box. 'Clutch 'as gone' he said, 'I've stripped it out for you'. These clutches one on each side of the operator, were worked manually to close the tines under the sleepers. It took me ages to fathom out which bits went where when I reassembled it and Dick was 'politely' asked to leave things to the fitters in future. In 1966 whilst working on his Tamping Machine in the Lune Gorge at Tebay, I slipped on a concrete sleeper end and broke a metatarsal bone in my right foot. I sat on the machine till work ended and we ran to the sidings at Tebay, and Dick run me in his car to Lancaster Royal Infirmary. He waited while I was plastered up to the knee, and when he realised that I couldn't get to the station on crutches and carrying a toolbag, despite him living in Lancaster, he ran me home to Lostock Hall ! One last memory about Dick, a rough and ready man with hands like dinner plates, was that he made his daughter's wedding dress, a beautiful, very professional job that a dressmaker would have been proud of. He modestly said it was a skill he 'picked up in the Forces'. Men like that are of very happy memory. There was 'Tired Hands', a porter on Blackburn Station, who only removed his hands from his pockets to eat, who, when asked directions to a certain platform would point the way with his foot. And another East Lancs man, a dry'stone waller by trade, whose job was to repair boundary walls on the Skipton to Todmorden lines. He was well known for having long 'liquid lunches' in many hostelrys adjacent to the railway, and could be found in late afternoon, sleeping off the effects of his daily exertions on passenger trains returning to his home station. Towards the end of 1966 Big Stan, the electrician won a huge turkey in a raffle. With only himself and his wife at home he kindly decided that we would have it at work. Being 'well-in' with the manageress of the Refreshment Rooms on Platform 5 & 6 he arranged with her to cook the bird for us. Just before lunch on Christmas Eve Neil and I were detailed to fetch it over to the workshop. We collected it on a huge plate, together with a container of chips she'd done for us. (Stan really was well-in). He carved the bird and a dozen or so of us feasted on it, polished off the chips, and as usual on Christmas Eve we went for a few drinks in the 'Bottom House', the Railway Hotel (Management turned a blind eye for the one day). With masses of meat left on the carcass we reckoned we'd have another go at it when we came back. On returning to the mess room we were greeted by the sight of just a few well stripped bones on the plate. Some so and so had stripped the lot ! Suspicion fell on the two or three non-drinkers, but they'd all gone home. On returning after the Christmas break they all hotly denied responsibility, so we subjected them to turkey noises. The 'gobble gobbling' went on for a few days but got us nowhere.

More next month .....

# Diary of James Green      305712

**8th King's Liverpool Regt.**

**B.E.F. France**

**1914-1918**



Thursday April 4th A lot has happened since I last wrote in this diary. That night in the trenches we felt that something was going to happen because all night long 'Jerry' was sending gas shells over. We had to have our gasmasks on all night. As it was getting towards dawn the shelling got heavier. There was a heavy mist over the ground, you could not see anything then, at about 5 o'clock, we heard the sound of hunting horns being blown and the shelling stopped. The next we saw was the hordes of Germans dashing over. Me and John Green were on our Lewis Gun, all we had time to do was mount the gun on the parapet of the trench and we saw all our fellows in the next bay with their hands up surrounded by Germans. We gave the lot 2 bursts of Lewis Gun fire then picked the gun up and beat it to the communication trench leading down to the supports. We got there before the Germans. We gave them another burst and then retreated to another position further back. We were being over run all round we seemed to be surrounded by Germans. There only seemed to be John Green, myself and another lad belonging to our gun team and we stayed there all that day and the night and held the position, we had nothing to eat. Next day our Colonel came up and said he would try to get something to eat and drink up to us but we had not any chance of leaving the post. It was the end of the line. He said the Germans had broken through both flanks of our division but the line held by our division, the '55th West Lancashire', were holding. But the Germans had advanced about 8 miles on either side of us.

Wednesday. Our division is still holding him on the 'Festubert', 'Le Plantin' and 'Givenchy' sector, he is still attacking on our left. It's simply slaughter round 'Givenchy'. He is strafing our Brestworks with 12" shells everything is going up in the air our fellows are being killed and buried in dozens. There seems to be hardly anybody left but we are still holding the line. S.O.S. gone off on the left again.

Thursday. Expecting him attacking us again 9.0'clock from what prisoners say. Hardly had anything to eat so far. I got taken out of the line today I could not see, it was the gas that had affected my eyes. I was taken down to the first aid post and dressed and sent down to 'Gorre'. I could walk but not see so three of us made our way down the road. I was helped by the other two who could see but were wounded. It was hellish on that road, shells coming over in hundreds, everything being blown sky high. The roads were littered with mortar, gun carriages, horse-drawn general service wagons all smashed up and shell holes all over, we had a job to pick our way down to the village of 'Gorre'. It was a shambles. Dead lying all over the place, they had been caught by the shellfire and died where they were. All shops were smashed, the contents scattered all over the place, in some of them the shopkeepers were lying on the floor dead. There were lots of soldiers lying in the streets they were reinforcements coming up to relieve us but had been caught by the shellfire. Thank God we

got through safely and arrived at the dressing station in 'Gorre'. It had taken us a couple of hours to make our way from the fighting. Left there in the ambulance to 'Choches', admitted to Casualty Clearing Station. Just as we were going through 'Bouvery', just outside 'Gorre', gas shells were dropping all along the road we all had to put our gas masks on also the driver. It was a rough ride.

We left the Casualty Clearing Station at 10 o'clock that night on the train to 'Etaples'. About the afternoon the next day I got put in the '24th General Hospital'. The doctor came round and marked me for England. I can't rest now until I get away. Got woken up at about 2 o'clock in the morning by the nurse, she said, "get dressed Green for Blighty". It did not take me long. We left 'Etaples' at 6 o'clock it did seem ages before we got a move on. We boarded the hospital train. I was a stretcher case. I was lying in bed on the train when down the corridor a hospital orderly came and what was my surprise when who should it be but Stephen Black, he recognised me and after that I got good attention. We had a good chat during the journey down to the quay. When they were taking me out of the train he gave me a parcel for my Aunt Annie, he said they were souvenirs.

Got aboard the 'A F Stern' had dinner on board. It sailed at 1-15 goodbye France for the 3rd time, I wonder if this will be the last time, I hope so. Arrived at dear old 'Blighty' at 4 o'clock, got aboard the ambulance train for London had tea on train got into London about 9 o'clock. What a crowd to meet us leaving the station, the people lined the way shouting and cheering, they filled our cars with flowers. It's good to be alive. Arrived at the '2nd London General Hospital' at Chelsea. Got a good supper, a hot bath and into a nice white bed. (It can't be true). Sunday. I thought I was dreaming this morning when I awoke, no stand-to, breakfast in bed, I am afraid I will wake up and find myself back in France.

Got out of bed after being in a darkened room for 2 weeks with a bandage over my eyes. When they took it off I could see but not very well. I was allowed to go out in London with some other fellows, some of them belonged to London and took me to their houses. They also took me to see The Strand, Piccadilly, Regent St, and the Albert and British Museums, in the Zoo, Hyde Park, Green Park, Rotten Row, have seen the Albert Memorial (it's a fine piece of work) and Nelson's Column. I am not struck with London.

I am getting transferred to the Convalescent Camp at Blackpool.

Tuesday. Left London to go to Blackpool. Arrived at the camp hospital, it's an old friend of mine I was here in 1915 what a change since I was last here. No fun like there used to be, the place is like a prison camp. I am fed up already. Whit-week starts next week I suppose this place will be full of visitors on their holidays, (more fancy dresses dashing about). Emily came down from Yorkshire on her holiday with her father and mother. I was round at their lodgings every day for my tea, I had a grand time with them all. After they had gone back home after their holiday I asked to be marked out. I spent part of my leave at their house and I overstayed my leave by 2 days. It was worth it. Arrived back at Owestry on Saturday, got 2 days R.W. and 2 days pay stopped also confined to camp for a week for 2 being days absent. I am dodging about the camp like the old days I was here. They will not get me doing much. The battalion is moving from here on Sunday to another camp in Norfolk. I may not go with them yet, I hope not anyway, still, I don't want to stop here.

Continued next month .....

# PRESTON THEN AND NOW 1843 – 1893

## 'THE CHANGES OF HALF A CENTURY'

In referring to the old Town Hall, we remember a ridiculous incident that occurred in it during the first mayoralty of the late Alderman Thomas Walmsley, in 1854. One night in the summer, a police man found a dwarfish fellow who gave his name as 'Bob Alty' donkey driver, from Southport, fast asleep on the Town Hall step, and seeing that he was drunk, haled him to the police station in Avenham-street, a far more Newgate-looking prison than the present one. In the morning when Bob appeared in court, his immense head covered with a shock of matted black hair, was only just visible at the edge of the dock, and he seemed quite terror-stricken. Mr Walmsley was the only magistrate present. The charge having been stated against Bob, who was trembling with fear and excitement, he exclaimed 'Oh do forgie me this time Mr Walmsley, an' aw'll never come to Preston no moor; an aw'll gie yo a ride on my donkey, when you come to Sewthpooart ageaan for nowt, aw will-FOR NOWT!' This appeal was received with shouts of laughter in Court; but the benevolent old gentleman on the Bench preserved the gravity befitting his office, and he mercifully let Bob go on condition that he would leave Preston at once. It was in this old police-court that we once heard a magistrate say to a forlorn looking old felon in the dock, who was muttering something in excuse 'Keep up your vice ! Keep up your vice'. In 1853 two years before the ancient buildings in the Market-place were demolished, the obelisk, or Market Cross, a clustered column 80 feet high, with a lamp on top, erected nearly in the middle of the square in 1728, was removed together with the old fish-stones, standing a few yards only from Anchor-wiend. The fish-market was afterwards for a time held at the Corn Exchange, and then removed to the present ground, between the Orchard and Lord-street. The last man who sold fish at the stones in the Market-place was one 'Johnnie' McGowan, quite a character in his way. He could neither read nor write, yet could recite two lengthy speeches of Dan O'Connell on the Repeal of the Union, with good action and emphasis. It was thought he had had them read to him until he had committed them to memory, being himself an Irishman and profound admirer of the great Irish tribune. When Johnnie was bereft of the fish-stones, he became tenant of the shop now occupied by Mr E Payne, nurseryman, near the corner of Chapel-street, and sometime afterwards came to a sad end. It had been his habit to be tee-total for a month or six weeks, and then slide into a frightful time of drunkenness. After one of these fits of debauchery he was found dead at the bottom of a flight of cellar steps in Shepherd-street, his neck broken. The site for the new Town Hall being in preparation, the next question was the appointment of the Guild Mayor. There was a strong partiality in the Town Council for Mr R Townley Parker, of Cuedale Hall, and it was agreed to invite him to accept the office. It was thought that the invitation would be agreeable compliment to the old gentleman, as his grandfather was Guild Mayor just a hundred years before. Mr Parker, however, was not a burgess, but the difficulty of non-citizenship was overcome by an astute device of the late Alderman Goodair (Mayor in 1860-61), who obligingly



let Mr Parker a stable at the yearly rent of £10. He was thus created a burgess of Preston and was elected a Councillor for St Johns ward on the 1st November 1861, and so made eligible for the civic chair on the 9th of that month, according to the custom of the Preston Town Council, who have never yet elected a mayor outside of that charmed circle, Mr Parker, was made an alderman in January, 1862, on the resignation of Mr William Shawe, who died just ten years afterwards aged 90. The foundation stone of the new Town Hall was laid by the Guild Mayor, with Masonic ceremony, on the 2nd April, of the Guild Week of 1862. It was erected by the design of Sir Gilbert Scott, and Messrs Cooper and Tullis were the contractors. It is considered a perfect gem of architecture, but rather small for so large a borough, although it cost nearly £70,000. It was opened in October, 1867, by the Duke of Cambridge, in the first mayoralty, of Alderman Birley, on which occasion Madame Lemmens Sherrington, a native of Preston, sang the National Anthem in charming style. The room called the Guild Hall is very beautiful, and is greatly admired, it is acoustically perfect too, being resonant with echo. On New Years Day, 1879, the Free Public Library was opened in the spacious hall on the front ground floor, some time previously used as an Exchange by the merchants of the town. One of the considerable changes within our fifty years, and a great public convenience, was the opening of Lancaster-road, at its junction with Church-street, about 1850, by the demolition of the old Stanley Arms public-house and adjoining tenements. Molyneux-square and Lancaster-road were approached from Church-street through an archway under those buildings, similar to the entrance to the Bull Hotel. Just through the arch, on the right, stood the old Golden Cross Inn. All the old buildings on that side of the road as far as Crooked-lane, including slaughterhouses, stables, the old Roebuck Inn, &c., were swept away to give place to the existing modern erections. Among other changes, we miss the fine unique portico of the Old Bank, in Church-street, which premises, after the stoppage of Messrs Peddar, in 1861, were occupied in the following year by the Manchester and County Banking Company, who in 1883, removed their business to the new bank specially erected near the Town Hall, and the Old Bank were converted into shops. Nearly opposite, a handsome habitat for the Conservative Working Men's Club is approaching completion on the site of a building occupied for upwards of 200 years as a barbers shop, the last occupant being Mr R Coward, whose father, grandfather and great-grandfather were all professors of the tonsorial art. The foundation stone of the new club house, which is from the designs of Messrs Park and Son, was laid on the 17th December last, by Alderman E Birley, and it is expected that the building will be opened in September or October next by Lord Salisbury. For about 15 years the members of this club have met in the dingy rooms of a house in Addison's-yard, Church-street, and they now naturally look forward with pleasure to the occupancy of their new home.

The Preston Chronicle 18th March, 1893  
 Continued next month .....  
 Preston Market 1844 Courtesy of Preston Digital  
 Archive (see McGowan's fish stall)



# PRESTON SAILORS AND SOLDIERS FREE BUFFET



Preston Station Buffet - At a meeting held at Preston Town Hall yesterday, the ladies responsible for the control of The Preston Station Sailors and Soldiers Free Buffet discussed the details of the proposed 'buffet week' from September 8th to 15th. This is to open with a 'sixpenny social' to include a market fair and auction on a large scale at the Covered Market on the 13th, and to conclude with a flag day.

Lancashire Daily Post 20th July 1917

Preston Station Buffet - Splendid Fair on Market Ground - Raising funds for a worthy object - Though the weather was damp

and depressing, there was a large attendance at the opening, this morning, of the Market Fair and Carnival, held on the Preston Covered Market in aid of the Sailors and Soldiers Free Buffet at the Preston Railway Station. The 'Covered Market' is a misnomer, in so far as it conveys the idea that it is an adequate shelter. It is simply a roofed-over structure of vast area, with all four sides open to all the winds that blow, and of how wind and rain can sweep through on the bad days only the market people can give a true idea. But for this occasion the sides were protected with canvas, and the enclosure was fully protected from the weather. The whole interior had a comfortable and at the same time a busy aspect with its numerous gaily bedecked stalls filled with all kinds of merchandise, the gifts - and in many cases the result of the skill and craftsmanship - of a great number of donors. Among those who have contributed of their own work are the wounded soldiers who have a stall specially set apart containing many specimens on sale of their handiwork in illustration of the minor arts. One cannot fail to be struck with ingenuity and the skill they have developed with their many hours of leisure. How many hours that would have been tedious have passed pleasantly away in these little occupations! And what a special talent has occasionally been revealed! Other stalls are devoted to basketware, china, displays of cake and jam, sweets and cigarettes, and flowers, and articles of domestic utility. A connoisseur of ceramics might discover some little treasure in the antique stall, where Toby jugs, willow pattern plates, and other specimens of old English pottery are on sale, along with Indian brass work, bronzes, quaint carvings, old engravings, rare old books, embroidered fabrics, furniture, and curiosities from all climes. There is also an Esperanto stall, which is doing excellent propaganda work, and the turning a honest penny for the benefit of the buffet. The collection of fruit and vegetables are gloriously ample, and we cannot help but think that the allotment holders have come forward effusively with their gigantic vegetable marrows, beets, cauliflowers and other produce which the Board of Agriculture and the local horticultural experts have painfully instructed them on how to grow. The game is kept alive with donkey rides, pierrot performances, comic hat trimming competitions for men, and numerous other devices that have been invented during the war to provide amusement and to raise money for very worthy objects. The carnival was opened this morning by renowned comedian Mark Sheridan, who was to appear later on in the afternoon as an auctioneer raised with the task of selling a celebrated pedigree 'moke' known by the name of 'Blighty'. Mr Boyle, manager of the Palace Theatre, Preston, introduced Mr Sheridan to the crowd this morning. The artist appealed to all to make that fair a success. 'Don't forget' he said, 'that it is for the lads. We are working for a good cause, and we will see what we can get.' Rain came down in torrents during the afternoon, but there was nevertheless an augmented attendance, the enclosure being crowded almost to the point of inconvenience. A lively interest was taken

in the proceedings, and especially in the auction conducted by Mr Mark Sheridan (who is at Morecambe this week) assisted by Mr Harry Taft (now appearing at the Preston Hippodrome). Both comedians met with a hearty reception. Sheridan set about the business with great earnestness, and proved to be well skilled in the persuasive arts. He coadjutor also acted the auctioneer to the manner born. His patient 'Blighty' was introduced and disposed of satisfactorily after Mr Sheridan had humorously expatiated on his numerous asinine qualifications. Some of the stock was sold over and over again, and in a very short time the sum of £33 was realised, at which point the sale was adjourned till this evening. It was announced that Dr Brown's carriage and double set of harness would be put up for auction for the benefit of the Buffet.

Lancashire Daily Post 13th September 1917

Thanks to Preston Donors - To The Editor of The Lancashire Daily Post - Sir, being a Preston lad, I write a few lines, hoping they may find their way into the 'Lancashire Daily Post'. Having been in port for a few days hard earned rest, we have during our brief stay received some splendid gifts of fruit and also vegetables from the people of Preston and district, and I should like to thank all senders of these gifts through the medium of your paper. These gifts have always been in the best condition, and have been very acceptable, as it is very rare indeed that we are able to have such things as cabbage or beans for our dinner. Perhaps some day we may have the pleasure of thanking all the senders personally. It is only a short time since I was able to visit my home, and I was struck by the difference between the town now and pre-war days. The buffet for our soldiers and sailors at the station comes in very useful, for when travelling they are glad to get a little to eat and drink during long and tiresome journeys. We have rather a lot of Lancashire lads on board here, and we all join together and thank all who have willingly sent these gifts of fruit and vegetables to the Fleet. Wishing your paper every success for the future. Yours

Pte. H R Truswell, HMS Shannon, 33 Mess, R.M.L.I. c/o GPO, London.

Lancashire Daily Post 2nd September 1917

Preston Buffet – Ex Naval Mans Tribute to its Value – A striking tribute to the value of the Preston Station Buffet for Sailors and Soldiers is afforded in a letter just received from C. Jepson, discharged from the Naval Service, who, with other survivors from a torpedoed war ship, was saved twelve months ago today. He explains that although that was the only occasion on which he has been through the buffet his comrades and himself were treated so well that he made up his mind he would show his gratitude at the first opportunity which is now. The party had had nothing to eat for about 48 hours, except one light meal of bread and butter at Southampton, and he himself suffering from tuberculosis as well. 'I got my discharge in March' he goes on to say 'and have just started work having had sanatorium treatment, which did me good, and I am doing very well where I am now employed. I hope that the enclosed P.O. will reach you safely, and that it will help some other stranded soldier or sailor. I should like half to be used for your general funds and the other half to be given out in cigarettes on the 22nd of this month, as I was penniless, as well as foodless and smokeless when I was set up free by one of the finest set of ladies I have ever met. I am telling you the truth when I say that at most of the buffets I have seen the ladies work harder than a lot of nurses, and I have seen both as a R.A.M.C. man. It is all the more creditable to them that most of them work honorarily. Lancashire Daily Post 22nd December 1917

Images of Preston Buffet flags courtesy of Preston Digital Archive



# A Preston Lad

Time passed and summer was fast passing into Autumn, one Saturday Mr Thornley was paying me a visit and he brought me a present. A ball, a rubber ball, a pinky colour, covered in little dimples all over its surface. I was duly grateful and thanked him for it as I bounced it up and down, thinking I will have a game with this with the other boys when he leaves me. Four o'clock came and he left me, after tousling my hair in his usual fashion and bade me 'Ta ra'. Miss Hall walked with him to shut the gate and as was usual had a few minutes talk with him. When she came back she shouted for me to come in. 'Where's the ball Mr Thornley gave you?' she demanded. 'Here' I replied. I had it up my jersey. I wondered what was wrong she looked livid. 'Give it to me' she almost screamed. 'That goes in the back of the fire, you ungrateful scamp' and wanged me across the face. 'I'll teach you not to say thank you when somebody gives you something'. 'Take that and that' giving me two more stinging clouts. My ears were ringing with the force of her slaps. It seemed Mr Thornley had complained to her that he was surprised at Eric. I brought and gave him a ball and he didn't even say thank you. He must not have heard me. 'I did say thank you' I whimpered. 'I did'. 'Don't lie to me' she said, 'I would sooner have a thief than a liar'. 'And what does that make Mr Thornley, are you calling him a liar'. I subsided into silence, it hurt more at what Mr Thornley had said to her that the belting I was getting. I also forfeited next Saturday's penny and got ticked off regular all week. 'Breeding will out, what can you expect with a mother like yours'. On Mr Thornley's next visit I was still feeling hurt. To tell the truth, I did then, and still do, sulk a lot if things go wrong, so I sulked, but would not say why or give any reason.

Any answer I gave to his questions were short and perfunctory. Then he said, 'Eric, would you like to go with me to the carnival at Chorley next Saturday, then after we will go and see Esther.' Esther being Mrs Brown, my foster mother, in hospital at Chorley after a stroke. Still feeling surly at him for the trouble I felt he had caused me I just mumbled, 'No'. 'Ah well' he said 'its up to thee'. He left me soon afterwards and I never saw him again. His visits ceased and I knew I would not be able to go and live with him when I left school, and also I would not see Walter or Kathleen again. All through a rubber ball and a sulky badtempered upset little boy. Miss Hall had a favourite saying that I have often brought to mind, and it was most applicable then. 'Never let your chances pass you by' and also 'You will never miss the water till the well runs dry'. I punished myself for years, wondering how my old foster mother reacted to Mr Thornley telling her I had refused to come. Did his visits cease on account of how Mrs Brown being upset at me, being so cruel. Did she die of a broken heart? Did I and was I responsible for her death after all she had done for me when I was an unwanted baby? I will never know. One little word, NO, altered my whole future, I rued saying it almost immediately after I had uttered it. I did want to see the carnival. I did want to see my foster mum. The funny part of all this is, it did not teach me a lesson, the times I have sulked and refused things on offer, just because of some real or imagined feeling. Years later, I would have been eighteen or so, I found myself living in Leyland, in the Moss Side area. I often visited the Regent Cinema, a few scant yards from where Mr Thornley resided, and yet it never entered my head to eat humble pie and call at Number 7 Hough Lane and explain the reason, and also the chapter of events that led to the dissolution of the wonderful love and care that Mr Thornley had shown me. He might have understood and forgiven me. Wouldn't that have been wonderful to have resumed our friendship. As an adult I could have questioned him and learnt more about my early life, my adoption, why my real mother had forsaken me. He could have revealed incidents about my life in Dewhurst Row, a wealth of interesting facts concerning Ma Brown and our relationship. He was still living there as

late as 1948 and yet I never gave it a thought to visit him. I could even have seen Kathleen again, it was a possibility, but such are the vagaries of callow youth and when the idea struck me it was too late. My life could have changed for the better, even at eighteen. Never let your chances ..... I would have been wise to heed it.

Staticians say that the summers of the twenties were no different on average than the summers of the present day. It might have been that one only remembers the better times, but it never seemed to rain in the summer time of those far off days of yesteryear. We still had to wear our caps and jerseys no matter how hot it became. Most male adults still dressed in their waistcoats and jackets and would sweat profusely. People did not appear in public in rolled up sleeves or showing their braces. By jove! No! Decorum prevailed. Young ladies' apparel became more airy and flimsy, but gloves were always worn, albeit they were made of very fine lace. They came right up to their elbows in a lot of cases. The younger girls in pinnies and ribbons, with masses of curls at weekends, after they had had their hair in plaits or rags all Friday night and Saturday morning. No perms in those days. Some Saturdays we would visit a few chip shops and ask if they had any crispy bits of batter they had sieved out of the fat and put in a container on the range. I suppose they got thrown away, but we enjoyed them immensely. Afterwards twenty greasy pairs of hands were wiped on ten pairs of pants. So whatever your station is, there are always good times and bad to be had, and we of the humblest environment (that word wasn't used then) fared no different. There were times when we hadn't a care in the world then at others we felt like the mythical figure of Atlas. My own first fourteen years had more ups and downs than the cocks and hens at the fairground, and after that it got worse. But like everyone else I still laughed and cried in turn as I made my torturous way down the road of life. At least as you stroll down Memory Lane, the bad times recede and the good times become more prominent. Mother Nature is a very clever person.

Whilst I was at the orphanage there must have been an epidemic of some kind, whether it was influenza or not I never knew. For weeks the funeral hearses and carriages, drawn by black horses with tall black plumes on their heads, slowly wended their way down New Hall Lane to the Cemetery. Dozens a day carried their grisly burdens and we had to stop, doff our caps and wait till they passed. I was late for school one morning with having to perform this mark of respect quite a few times. The headmaster looked quite incredulous when I gave my reason for being late for the bell. He evidently thought I was taking advantage of the macabre goings on, I did well not to get caned. My chief reasons for getting caned, which was quite often, was because I was an inveterate gossip. I was always talking in class. Lessons were no trouble to me, so I seemed to have plenty of time to spare, so I talked and paid the penalty. I was also pretty good at lying my way out of trouble which caused Miss Hall to use the oft repeated phrase 'Crook! You have always an excuse'. On one such occasion she said 'Are you positive'. At that time I had no idea what 'positive' meant and gave the wrong answer to my chagrin. I got walloped another time when I was quite young, she used the words 'do you deny it' again I did not know what 'deny' meant, but very soon learnt.

In a way I suppose it became a battle of wits, committing misdemeanors, not always deliberately, then seeing if we could avoid punishment, so escapades occurred more often than they should have done. I sense the dice was loaded in her favour. More next month ..... By Arthur Eric Crook (1917-1997)

# Rhymes of a Red Cross Man by Robert W. Service (1876 – 1958)

## Tipperary Days



Oh, weren't they the fine boys! You never saw the beat of them,  
Singing all together with their throats bronze-bare;  
Fighting-fit and mirth-mad, music in the feet of them,  
Swinging on to glory and the wrath out there.  
Laughing by and chaffing by, frolic in the smiles of them,  
On the road, the white road, all the afternoon;  
Strangers in a strange land, miles and miles and miles of them,  
Battle-bound and heart-high, and singing this tune:

It's a long way to Tipperary,  
It's a long way to go;  
It's a long way to Tipperary,  
And the sweetest girl I know.  
Good-bye, Piccadilly,  
Farewell, Lester Square:  
It's a long, long way to Tipperary,  
But my heart's right there.

"Come, Yvonne and Juliette! Come, Mimi, and cheer for them!  
Throw them flowers and kisses as they pass you by.  
Aren't they the lovely lads! Haven't you a tear for them  
Going out so gallantly to dare and die?  
What is it they're singing so? Some high hymn of Motherland?  
Some immortal chanson of their Faith and King?  
'Marseillaise' or 'Brabanc,on', anthem of that other land,  
Dears, let us remember it, that song they sing:

"C'est un chemin long 'to Teepararee',  
C'est un chemin long, c'est vrai;  
C'est un chemin long 'to Teepararee',  
Et la belle fille qu'je connais.  
Bonjour, Peekadeely!  
Au revoir, Lestaire Squire!  
C'est un chemin long 'to Teepararee',  
Mais mon coeur 'ees zaire!"

The gallant old "Contemptibles"! There isn't much remains of them,  
So full of fun and fitness, and a-singing in their pride;  
For some are cold as clabber and the corby picks the brains of them,  
And some are back in Blighty, and a-wishing they had died.  
And yet it seems but yesterday, that great, glad sight of them,  
Swinging on to battle as the sky grew black and black;  
But oh their glee and glory, and the great, grim fight of them!—  
Just whistle Tipperary and it all comes back:

It's a long way to Tipperary  
(Which means "ome" anywhere);  
It's a long way to Tipperary  
(And the things wot make you care).  
Good-bye, Piccadilly  
('Ow I 'opes my folks is well);  
It's a long, long way to Tipperary—  
('R! Ain't War just 'ell?)

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We are pleased to announce that work has started on our  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a million pound refurbishment to part of our Science Labs. The refurbishment will deliver exciting and innovative learning spaces, inspiring individual pupils to flourish.



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