

## Preston Past: Preston's 'Old' Town (Moot) Hall

By Paul D. Swarbrick



The above image shows a view from Fishergate of the 'Old' Town Hall of Preston, occupying the site of the present Crystal House which replaced the former Town Hall of the mid 1800's to the mid 1900's. It is probably not such a recognisable sight to most Prestonians of today as it was built in 1781/82 following the collapse of the ancient Moot Hall on the same site in 1780. The properties seen at the right were later replaced by the Miller Arcade in 1899.

Only about half the site between Fishergate and the Market Square was occupied by the Town Hall, the remainder of the site being taken up by timber framed buildings and the image below shows the rear south side of the Town Hall facing the Market Square. *The Town Hall was built at a cost of £700.*



The insert, on the lower right side of the above image of the rear of the 'old' Town Hall, is that of the timber framed buildings that were originally standing on the vacant site. The triple-eaved building in the centre was built for Anne and John Jenkinson and completed in 1629. I feel sure you will agree that the buildings looked quite splendid and graced the Square magnificently. These timber framed structures were demolished in 1855 when, at that time, no decision had been made and for some years the council had deliberated as to what to do with the land. Then in 1862 the remainder of the site was flattened when the town hall was demolished to make way for the ill fated Sir George Gilbert Scott's Town hall which a lot more Prestonians will be more familiar with today.

As a point of interest, one of the old Town Hall clocks was removed and reinstalled at Beech Grove Farm, Greenhalgh near Kirkham and remains there today, still in full working order!

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