

## Preston Past: The Shambles, Lancaster Road



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

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

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

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

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

Most of the images in this series of articles are 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.