



Preston Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

PROMOTING THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY IN PRESTON AND LANCASHIRE

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About the PHS

The aims and objectives of the Preston Historical Society are to promote the study of local history in Preston and Lancashire by way of social and natural history talks given by local historians and speakers, various events, and by using social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Our meetings usually start at 7.15 pm on the first Monday of each month during the season. The seasonal membership subscription is £12.50 and visitor admission to a single meeting is £3.00.

New phone number

Need to contact the PHS for information or to find out any last minute info? You can now call the PHS on...

07504 262497

COMING SOON

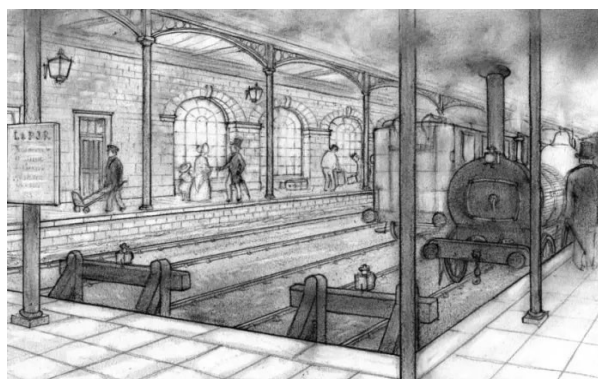
**Monday 6th
November 2017**

**Preston's
19th Century
Newspapers**

**Speaker:
Dr Andrew
Hobbs**

All aboard!

For our October meeting the society will be presenting Dr Andrew White who will be talking about “The Lancaster and Preston Junction Railway”.



A reconstructed view of Penny Street Station, Lancaster - by David Vale

One hundred and eighty years ago Lancaster was preparing to build a railway, linking it to the Midlands and London. It also wanted to seize the initiative as to where such a railway would go, since there was a chance that the town would be bypassed by a future main line between

London and Scotland. At this point Preston was still without a railway link, but the North Union was building a line which connected with Liverpool and Manchester and would soon connect with the Grand Junction and London and Birmingham Railways. A group of local merchants and entrepreneurs formed a company and soon obtained an Act of Parliament. By 1838 they were building the line, which was relatively level and straight, with few engineering difficulties on the way. The biggest challenge was the building of the viaduct across the Conder valley at Galgate, which intercity trains still use. The railway opened in 1840 with great celebrations and trains started running the day after, with some running through or connecting with trains to London.

The talk will take place in Preston Minster, Church Street, Preston PR1 3BU on 2 October at 7.15pm

Fantastic turnout for the September meeting



Lady Grenfell-Baines attracted a full house for her wonderful talk on “The Last Train to Tomorrow”, of the September meeting. Lady Grenfell-Baines spoke with great sensitivity and passion about her long journey with her sister and other children from Czechoslovakia to Great Britain, saved by the marvellous Sir Nicholas Winton during the second world war.

Having waived a speakers fee, Lady Grenfell-Baines was presented with a cheque on behalf of the society by David Hindle to contribute to her charity which she accepted with sincere gratitude.



Harry Shorrock, respected member of the old Preston Scientific Society, has sadly died.

David Hindle, President of the Preston Historical Society and lifelong friend of Harry told us: “ Harry’s pioneering contribution to Lancashire natural history was massive. He was also a respected long serving member of the old Preston Scientific Society, now known as the Preston Society, and its President up to his death on the 4th August, 2017.”

Extracts from the obituary by David John Hindle Harry Shorrock 1930 -2017

My lifelong friend Harry Shorrock was a Prestonian born and brought up in the Plungington Road area of Preston, where he lived with his mother and father and younger brother Johnny. He attended Deepdale Modern School where the renowned Tom Finney was a fellow pupil, though in a different year and not in the same class. Harry’s magnetic personality was infectious and he gained many friends all over the country AND I know he was friends with several members of Preston Historical Society. Moreover, David Hunt gives Harry a mention in his classic book on the History of Preston.

In civilian life Harry worked as a personnel officer at the Leyland and Birmingham Rubber Company at Leyland for many years and later as a Safety Officer with South Ribble Council. I first met him when I joined the Preston Scientific Society as a schoolboy in 1956 and he was only 26. Harry became my mentor sharing my passion for bird watching and stimulating a keen interest in classical music. I will always be grateful to him for that. His enthusiasm was inspirational and he greatly encouraged many other mutual friends. He was the longest serving member of Preston Scientific Society and its President.

In 2014 I said to him ‘What are you going to do with your diaries, Harry, in the foreseeable future?’ Typically he replied, ‘Oh they can do what they want with them when I go; they will probably end up in a skip.’ I said, ‘Hang on a bit. These will become a very valuable source of reference to this and future generations,

reflecting the natural history scene in the North West during the mid C20th. Would you mind if I ask the Lancashire Record Office to take them please?’ Harry granted permission and the following day I filled my car with them and took them to Bow Lane, where they have been indexed ‘the natural history diaries of Harry Shorrock. (1946 – 2014) Thus documentary evidence of his contribution to natural history will be immortalised and will also serve as a legacy to a unique Lancashire character and he was definitely a character. He was never happier than being surrounded with friends, whilst regaling over an enthralling tale to his awestruck captive audience. We listened patiently whilst thinking about his amusing stories and only he could tell them the way he did. Harry was charismatic and funny and his timing and wit for pouring out a wealth of anecdotal material was spot on.

I have to say that at times he seemed to enjoy a jolly good argument, usually playing devil’s advocate, I think! Just occasionally I began to think this guy is the ultimate pragmatist ‘but, you know what’ I will always think of him and miss him a great deal especially his quirky sense of humour, bless him. Despite the onset of a neurodegenerative illness Harry still had all his chairs at home, as he would say. Harry died peacefully in hospital on the 4th August, 2017.

Finally may I recount visiting young Harry at home No 42, Allen Street, Preston, way back in the 1950s. It was there that I first met a raven-haired beauty, young Dorothy Shorrock, dressed in her grammar school blazer and looking very smart indeed. Little did I know then that I was destined to marry Harry’s cousin and am very thankful for that unplanned brief encounter to this day. On the 19th September, 1970, Harry was a guest at my wedding and forty three years later he attended Dorothy’s funeral in June, 2013. To conclude, Harry was unique and there will never be another Harry Shorrock. Good bye Harry, I have been honoured and privileged to know you.

CAN YOU HELP?

The society is looking for assistance in the kitchen when a speaker has given their talk. This will only involve light duties of serving tea and coffee and helping to wash the pots afterwards. If you feel you can help occasionally then please see Gillian during a meeting or email her on the following address:

info@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

All about blue plaques

by Aidan Turner-Bishop



The Preston Historical Society took over responsibility for blue plaques in Preston from the former Civic Trust. Our first PHS plaque was a well-deserved one for Dick, Kerr Ladies football team's centenary. At meetings, sometimes, people suggest ideas for possible plaques to me; I thought it might be helpful to note some of our guidelines for plaques. Plaques are usually installed to publicly commemorate notable persons or events. They are normally visible from the street or exterior of buildings; plaques are seldom displayed indoors. They're not like memorial tablets found inside churches or public buildings. Plaques are expensive to manufacture and install. They are public records. Before any plaque is installed by the Society, or with the Society's approval, it is necessary and sensible that certain criteria are met.

The person or event must be significant nationally or regionally

Generally the person commemorated should have been eminent and sufficiently famous for her or his name to be familiar to a succeeding generation. Celebrity can be ephemeral. Who under 40 in Preston knows that Jimmy Clitheroe lived in Frenchwood? Jimmy Who?

The person should be dead for a reasonable time

Because plaques are a public recognition of an individual they imply an approval of that person. Criminals and socially disreputable people are not commemorated because this could cause offence and damage the Society's reputation. In some cases the early installation of a plaque, soon after death, may be done without knowledge of that person's character or, indeed, crimes. Scarborough Civic Society erected a plaque to Sir Jimmy Savile soon after his death; it has been removed now. In Manchester an embargo

period of 25 years after death is used; in London it's 20 years.

Information on the plaque should be accurate as far as possible

Plaques should be accurate. Every 'fact', even dates, on a plaque should be carefully checked. Statements of opinion should be avoided. Questionable descriptions should be cross-checked. Reliable written evidence of residence, birth or other circumstances of a recorded individual is needed. Edith Rigby's plaque in Winckley Square says she died in 1948; but it was 1950. No one checked her death certificate.

House numbers can change over the years. Robert Service's birthplace in Christian Road was renumbered before it was demolished. In this case an equivalent description 'near this place' was used. Accuracy is especially important in subjects that have keen followers such as military, railway or sporting matters. In an age of social media an error can be around the web in days. Responsibility for the accurate researching of an individual rests with the person or group suggesting a name to the Society.

Owners' permission

The approval of the property owner – not just a manager, clergy, tenant or lessee - where a plaque is to be installed is necessary. Unless an owner agrees, preferably in writing, the plaque can't be installed. This is necessary especially for listed building consent planning applications for putting plaques on listed buildings.

Planning permission

Any plaque on the exterior of a listed building requires Listed Building Consent from the Council Planning Committee. This means a planning application must be made. This must have copies of an Ordnance Survey large scale site plan map [costing at least £25+]; drawings of the plaque and the building's elevation; copies of written permissions from the owners; other supporting written evidence; and a planning application fee. Preston City Council can charge over £300 for this.

Cost

A typical aluminium blue plaque costs over £350 to make. If there's a planning application the cost can rise to over £700. The PHS can't afford it so where does the money come from? Who pays?

Disputes

The Preston Historical Society's decision whether or not to support the installation of a plaque is at the final discretion of the Society's Committee.

Aidan Turner-Bishop

Please email any queries you may have to the PHS secretary: info@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Aidan's Oddities

When walking around the historic city of Preston, there are many unusual sights to be seen. All you have to do is keep an eye open and look in the most unsuspecting places and you may well find something of an oddity while pottering about the streets. It always pays to carry a small camera or even a simple mobile phone which has a built-in camera; you never know when you will spot something of a curiosity worth capturing an image of.

A most unusual memorial

In Lancaster Road, opposite the former Dan Kerr wedding shop and outside Preston Office Centre, there is a rather small and unusual monument on the side of a planter. This monument appears to be in memory of Andrew Brewer 24th June 1964 to 6th February 1994. Who was this chap and can anyone provide



further information on who Andrew Brewer was and why this memorial is here? Did this gentleman bequeath one or all of the planters situated outside the offices? If you do

have any idea of the purpose of this memorial is for, then please let us know as we are most intrigued as to its origins.

Curious bovine spectacle in Deepdale

If you are anywhere in the vicinity of the recently constructed Tom Finney House on Tom Finney Way, then take a look in the gardens adjacent to the entrance. There you will be met by a life size sculpture of a cow which is facing the main road.



The purpose of this sculpture or life size model is somewhat unclear to us but, apart from it being next to the busy main road, it does give you the feeling that you might just be in the countryside. Maybe that is its purpose or if you know of anything different then please let us know.

Designer flue on Preston restaurant

The side wall of a fast food shop on Church Row is adorned with what can only be described as a very striking huge metal flue, vividly red in colour and so noticeably different from the usual dull aluminium type that you normally find emanating from a restaurant premises such as this one. Smart, designer-like or just simply garish! What do you think?



The strange face of Main Sprit Weind



For some time, there has been a mystery face which peers down from the summit of the gable end of a public house in Main Sprit Weind. This public house was the former Sun Inn throughout the 19th century and a very possible explanation as to the reason for the face embedded into the wall at the roof apex has been given by local histori-

an and well respected architectural expert, Colin Stansfield.

Colin says: "*the building dates back to the 1600's, when the (thatched) roof will have been higher, and the slope of it more pitched - to dispel snow from the roof more readily.*

The image will have originally have been surrounded by 'sun's rays' and will date from a time when inns and taverns were known "by the sign of....." and identifiable thereby, to the illiterate. When the thatch was replaced, and the ridge lowered, the sun's rays will have been lost".

Ways in which to contact the Preston Historical Society

By email: info@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

By telephone: 07504 262497

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/PrestonHistoricalSociety/

Twitter: @PrestonHistSoc