



Preston Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

PROMOTING THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY IN PRESTON AND LANCASHIRE

Issue 6

Summer 2018

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. Meetings usually start at 7.15 pm on the first Monday of each month during the season. The seasonal membership subscription is £12.50. Non-membership admission is £3.00 per visitor.

Contact PHS

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 3rd
Sept. 2018**

**NORTH WEST
FILM
ARCHIVES**

**Speaker:
Geoff
Senior**

Preston in the North West Film Archives

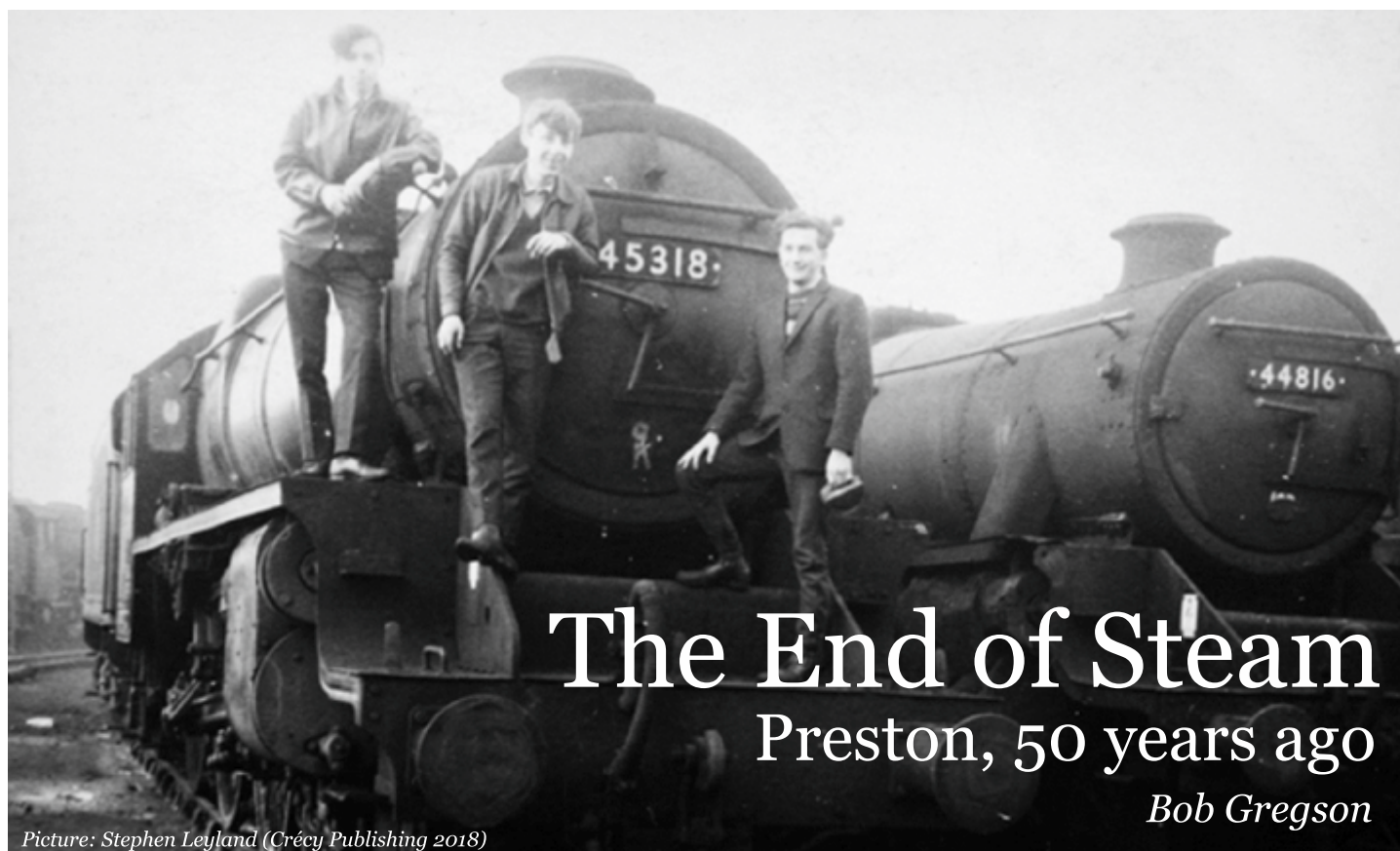


1952 Guild procession (Preston Digital Archive)

***Our 2018–19 season of
Preston Historical Society
talks and events starts with
an exciting visit by the
North West Film Archive,
based at Manchester
Metropolitan University.***

Preston was an early centre for cinema films, being the base for Hugh Rain's Preston Film Service which distributed silent films across the North West from its premises in Corporation Street. The Archive now has many films of life in Preston: the cotton industry, Royal visits, transport, and, of course, Guild processions and ceremonies. During the Archive's show on 3 September 2018, hosted by Geoff Senior, we hope

to see films of the Preston Bypass motorway in 1958; Richard Todd – the film star – at the ABC cinema; Sam Hanna's film of children's street games (try playing in the road today!); the 1952 Guild; and a Cholmondley-Walker style film from 1972 promoting moving to the charms of the Central Lancashire New Town. We're used to stiff, almost formal, black and white photographs of our ancestors. Cine films seem to bring them alive: they were just like us. And how fascinating it is to see the back-ground details: the long gone shops, the changing fashions (everyone seemed to wear hats), classic cars, horse carts, and electric trams, and some business names that are still with us. This promises to be a memorable opportunity for time travel into a Preston of not so long ago.



Picture: Stephen Leyland (Crécy Publishing 2018)

Fifty years ago the last steam train, in ordinary service, left Preston station in August 1968. Bob Gregson, the railway local historian was there and this is his account of the day:

I can remember the sequence of events on that evening as they signified an occasion which was at once unique, captivating and sad in a fatalistic and melancholy way. It all began that morning with a trip to Carlisle with a couple of friends. We had a look round the derelict shed at Kingmoor and then travelled south to visit Upperby shed. I reckon we got half way down the slope before a member of staff warned us off with words the likes of which you would not find in the Oxford dictionary. We then spent the remainder of the day looking round the remains of Carlisle Canal shed and found the people there quite friendly and talkative; they just couldn't comprehend as to why we had come such a long way in order to walk around the remnants of another age.

On our return to Blackburn by way of a diesel multiple unit from the East Lancs platforms at Preston, we encountered a group of lads who were more or less the same age as ourselves, running up the ramp from the unattended ticket barrier. We asked what all the excitement was about and one of them hastily informed us that there had been a change of motive power at Preston station and that two Black 5 steam locos had been selected to replace the type 4 diesels on the Liverpool and Blackpool services.

We did a quick about turn and headed back to the platforms, from where we journeyed back to the East Lancs bay at Preston. As we ran northwards along platform 9 we could discern a lot of activity on the main island platform. It prompted the question as to how so many people had got to know what was happening there. They could only have found out by way of the bush telegraph as we had done. Some three miles to the south of the station at Lostock Hall engine shed, two Black 5 locomotives, 45212 and 45318 were being prepared to run the Blackpool South and Liverpool Exchange services. Locomotive fitter Bob Gant was busy rectifying a fault on 45318 and this was essential as Driver

Ernie Heyes, who was a regimental and no-nonsense man, was not going to take that engine out of the yard until it had been fixed.

Back at Preston, more enthusiasts arrived on the main island platform. Those 'civvies' who were waiting for their trains to arrive were looking around in amazement and wondering what all the excitement was about. The show began around 20.30 hrs when 45212 arrived and reversed into the Derby bay to await the arrival of the 17.05 from Euston. The front portion of this train was for Glasgow and the rear portion for the 20.50 to Blackpool South. With the diesel-hauled front portion out of the way, driver Bob Barker reversed 45212 up to the coaches and his fireman, Ray Duckwoth, climbed down from the footplate and coupled up. After signing autographs and posing for the camera men, Bob and his mate got the train underway amid tumultuous cheers, exploding fog signals, and an electric storm of flashbulbs.

While this was going on, 45318 had arrived at the south end of the station tender-first and was waiting just to the north of the number 1 signal box for the arrival of the 17.25 from Glasgow. When the train came in the front portion was uncoupled and taken on to Manchester. The rear portion was the 21.25 to Liverpool Exchange. For some unknown reason the type 4 diesel locomotive, which normally hauled this particular train, was not available that evening. Driver Ernie Heyes and fireman Tony Smith also received the celebrity treatment as they prepared their locomotive for that final memorable journey across the South Lancashire plain. For the second time that evening a train set off to the accompaniment of loud hurrahs, detonations and dazzling flashbulbs. The carriages were absolutely packed with standing room only. People were leaning out of the windows exchanging funereal farewells with those on the platform. As the red tail light disappeared into the twilight it took some coming to terms with the fact that we had just witnessed the departure of the very last officially scheduled, steam-hauled

passenger service train to run on B.R. standard gauge tracks. It was the sad but inevitable end of an era which had begun some 140 years earlier just a few miles down the road at Rainhill.

One of my pals said that we should have nipped on board with all the other ticket-dodgers while the train was in the station, but I reckoned it would have been a physical impossibility and, besides, how were we going to get back from Liverpool at that time of the night? Too risky, far too risky. We had witnessed an historical event and that was enough. We then jumped on a bus which was bound for Leyland via Lostock Hall. We alighted somewhere near the Victoria pub and made our way to the engine shed. When we entered the shed we saw a number of dedicated volunteers busy cleaning up a batch of some thirteen locomotives which were to haul the six 'End of steam' specials on the following day. They were using buckets of diesel oil and rags; the locos were looking good with freshly painted buffer beams. The original B.R. lining was resurrected by way of the serrated edge of a half-crown piece. The locos gleamed in the lamplight, a sharp contrast to the dark mass of condemned locomotives in the yard and on the scrap sidings. While this was going on, 45212 had returned to Preston where she commenced pilot duty (making up trains and carriage heating). She was seen and photographed the following day at Preston on pilot duty with driver Bob Cooper at around 16.00 hrs. It had been a unique and historical evening and we had to run fast from Lostock Hall to Todd Lane Junction in order to catch the last train of the evening back home. We must have been mad!

Do you remember?



Johnson's Pie Shop, 56, Tithebarn Street, Preston c.1967
(Blog Preston)

Gillian Lawson wrote in Blog Preston: 'This popular little shop was run by two sisters, Irene and Vera Johnson, seen here standing in the doorway. The premises were next to the old Fire Station and just across from the Princes Theatre. I believe that they sold the most delicious pies. If you look closely in the window, you can see a white enamelled bowl of parched peas which was another of their tasty specialties.'

2018 talks

The first half of our 2018–19 season has the visit from the *North West Film Archive* on 3 September. This is followed by Steve Halliwell, on 1 October, talking about *My work as a local history detective*. Many will know Steve as the historian of Preston's inns and pubs and the compiler of his fascinating website – www.pubsinpreston.blogspot.com. Then on 5 November Mike Turner will talk about the *Preston General Election 1768 – 250 years ago* – which changed national history. The last talk of this year, on 3 December, is by David Hindle, our Society's President. It's about the *History and enjoyment of the Cumbrian Coast Railway*, the delightfully scenic line that circuits the edge of Morecambe Bay. We will need reminding of summer excursions there as we keep warm in the depth of gloomy December.

Web Wonders

People who enjoy finding out about Preston's history are fortunate that there are some very useful and interesting websites concerned with our city's history. Top of the list of excellent sites must surely be Peter Smith's Preston history. Articles, records and resources relating to the history of the Lancashire town of Preston at www.prestonhistory.com. Peter Smith writes that, 'Most of my life has been spent in Preston, being brought up in Deepdale and attending Deepdale Primary and Preston Grammar schools, and then working in journalism, publishing and teaching in the town. Hence my interest in its history.' He has posted an original and truly revealing annotated map of Preston's streets in 1685, showing each individual house and its owner. It's partly based on Kuerden's Survey in the Lancashire Archives.



His site provides a platform for other writers as, for example, Kim Travis's *History of Tulketh Hall*, John Bannister's *The Street Names of Preston* and Henry Kirby's *Preston Guardian Chronology*. Kirby's index, prepared in four volumes from 1844 until 1905, is well worth a look. Peter Smith says that 'Mr Kirby had a very good eye for the salient features to help signpost researchers through the morass of material contained in hundreds of densely printed publications' The Chronology is arranged as Vol. 1 – 1844 to 1860; Vol. 2 – 1861 to 1875; Vol. 3 – 1876 to 1890; Vol. 4 – 1891 to 1905. There are other resources and articles on the website which is well worth bookmarking.

Why Nares Street?

If you go along Tulketh Brow, about halfway up the road, you'll come across Nares Street. What an odd name. What does it mean? Why Nares? There's a curious tale of exploration and bravery behind the name and those of nearby Kane, Alert and Markham Streets.

John Bannister, in his *The Street names of Preston*, wrote: 'In the mid-19th century there were several expeditions to the Arctic Regions, principally to pioneer a North West Passage to the Bering Straits and the Pacific. Many lives were lost in these attempts, among them Sir John Franklin with nine of his officers and fifteen men. Captain R. Collinson was sent by the Government to search for Franklin but, apart from finding his winter quarters on Beechy Island, no trace of this ill-fated expedition was found. In a further search that left England in 1850, Collinson reached Victoria Land within a few miles of Point Victory where the fate of Franklin would have been ascertained. In this last voyage, Collinson navigated the second North West Passage, a similar passage having been made some months earlier by Captain R. McLure. Collinson Street, off Ribbleson Lane, honours Captain Collinson's achievements.'

'An American expedition, under the leadership of Dr. E. K. Kane discovered, among other things, the Humboldt Glacier, the world's greatest, which is 45 miles wide at its seaward end. In 1875, following Kane's discoveries, the British dispatched the 'Alert' under Commander A. H. Markham and Captains G. S. Nares and H. W. Fielden, and



the 'Discovery' commanded by Captain H. F. Stephenson and Lt. L. A. Beaumont. Beaumont made discoveries along the north coast of Greenland, while Markham and the 'Alert' reached a higher latitude and wintered further north than any ship had done before. Off Tulketh Brow can be found Kane Street, Nares Street, Markham Street, Alert Street and a row of houses called Alert Terrace.'

Nares wrote an account of the expedition *Narrative of a Voyage to the Polar Sea during 1875-6 in H.M. Ships 'Alert' and 'Discovery'*. Maybe this is how the streets in Preston were named? Vice-Admiral Sir

George Strong Nares KCB FRS (24 April 1831–15 January 1915) commanded the first ship to pass through the Suez Canal in November 1869, the Challenger Expedition, and the British Arctic Expedition. He was highly regarded as a leader and scientific explorer. In later life he worked for the Board of Trade and as Acting Conservator of the River Mersey. He died in 1915 aged 83.

The French Imperial yacht L'Aigle was officially the first vessel to pass through the Suez Canal on 17 November 1869, but HMS Newport, commanded by Nares, actually passed through it first. On the night before the canal was due to open, Nares navigated his vessel, in total darkness and without lights, through the mass of waiting ships until it was in front of L'Aigle. When dawn broke the French found that the Royal Navy was first in line and that it would be impossible to pass them. Nares received both an official reprimand and an unofficial vote of thanks from the Admiralty for his actions in promoting British interests and for demonstrating such superb seamanship. He was also promoted to captain.

Diary dates

September sees the return of Heritage Open Days. Details of local sites open to the public are listed at www.heritageopendays.org.uk. This year the Open Days are from September 6 to 9 and 13 to 16. In Preston the Council's Argyll Road depot is open for tours on Sunday 9 September at 10am, 11am, and 1pm. There are walks in local parks. Some churches are open as is the Watling Street Road Masjid e Salaam mosque.

South Ribble Museum has an interesting programme this autumn. Dr David Hunt is leading a local history walk in Bamber Bridge commemorating the Bamber Bridge VC John MacNamara. It starts at the MacNamara Garden (Withy Grove Rd/Station Rd corner) at 2pm on Sunday 9 September. He's also leading a walk, starting at 10.15am at the Harris Museum entrance, on Wednesday 10 October. It's about 'Hurrah for Hunt! On the track of the Preston Radicals'. On Saturday 10 November Stephen Sartin is giving a talk at the Museum in Leyland about 'Postwar Preston: a walk around the town in the 1950s'. It starts at 11am. Caroline Alexander, Keeper of Decorative Art at the Harris, is talking about Horrockses at the Leyland Museum on Thursday 22 November at 2pm. It's called 'Dressed to kill: the story of Horrockses Fashions'. November sees more celebrations of the centenary of women's suffrage. Helen



Howell talks about suffragette Edith Rigby on Saturday 8 December at 11am. Mrs Rigby herself (Judith Beeston) will be holding an audience at 11am on Saturday 15 December. There's a cheerful-sounding Tea Party to celebrate the Women's Vote on Friday 14 December at 2–4pm. Time to dress up in your purple, white, and green sashes, ladies. For more details see <http://south-ribble.co.uk/srmuseum>.

Quiz question

What empire started, a hundred years ago, at Gregson Lane on May 15, 1919?