



Preston Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

PROMOTING THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY IN PRESTON AND LANCASHIRE

Issue 7

Winter 2018

About the PHS

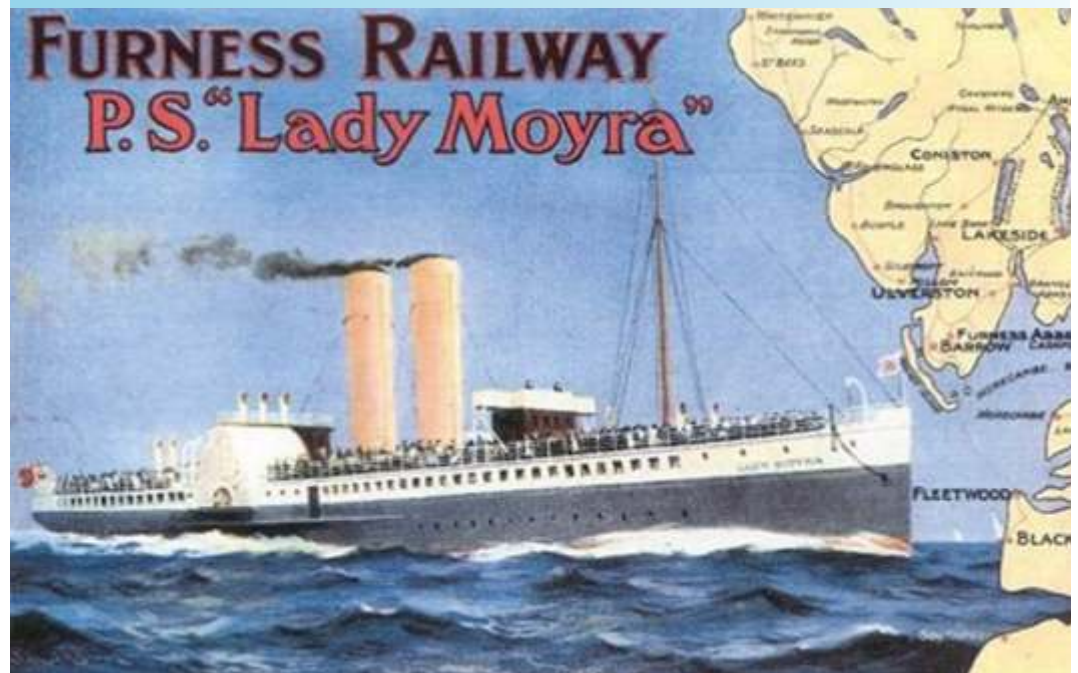
The aims and objectives of the Preston Historical Society are to promote the study of local history in Preston and Lancashire by way of social and natural history talks given by local historians and speakers, various events, and by using social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Meetings usually start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

History and enjoyment of the Cumbrian coast railway

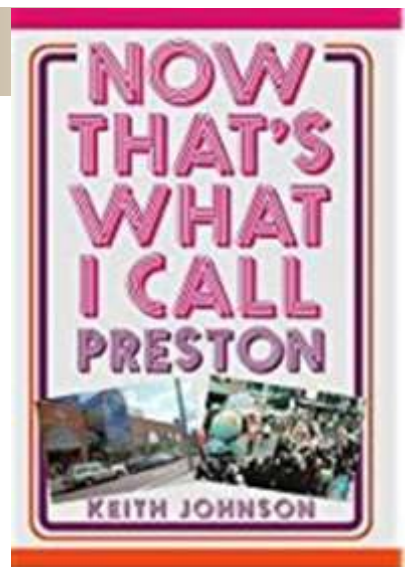


David Hindle's talk on 3 December 2018, is just the job for these dark, cold nights. We are transported to the days of paddle steamer excursions from Fleetwood to Barrow for trips along the scenic Furness Railway: crimson steam engines trundling into Grange, a stroll along the Prom, maybe some ginger pop or a nice cup of tea, as we watch the tide come in across Morecambe Bay.

Book review

The very recent past is often the hardest to recall. Keith Johnson's latest book about Preston's history, *Now that's what I call Preston* (Amberley, 2018: £14.99) makes this point well.

It's about our city in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. So much has changed! It's the small things that seem so distant now. Do you remember yellow Zippy buses sprinting past the Cenotaph? Or the gloomy waiting room benches at PRI, Saul Street baths, the ABC cinema on Fishergate, or Owen Owens opposite the Lancashire Evening Post offices? All gone now. Keith Johnson has compiled a fascinating collection of photographs from Preston's recent past, just in time for Christmas. And as for those seventies hair dos and ladies' bootees...



Preston Historical
Society Committee
wish you a
**Merry
Christmas
and a
Happy New
Year.**

PRESTON'S FORGOTTEN WOMEN

Great War heroines



Image: Preston Digital Archive.

A hundred years ago fighting in the Great War ended with the Armistice of 11 November 1918.

The war between Germany and the Allies didn't officially end until the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919. We've heard of accounts of celebrations, bellringing, merry-making, sirens hooting, and so on here in Preston and in other towns in 1918. But for many injured in body or mind the war was far from over; many, with their families, would be affected for life. In Preston the wounded and, indeed, dying were nursed in Moor Park Military Hospital, a very busy collection of wards and operating theatre huts in the park, staffed by some brave, dedicated, and hard-working volunteer women nurses, members of the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD).

The hospital was opened in January 1915. The earliest building was a pavilion provided by the Royal Lancashire Agricultural Society, intended to house 35 patients. As the war continued new wards were built and more equipment installed. The staff of Horrockses, Crewdson & Co. raised money for this work. Lord Hollins, the chairman of Horrockses, and his wife were patrons of the hospital. In early 1918 Grove House, at the junction of Moor Park Avenue and Garstang Road, became an annex of the hospital. It housed 28 patients. The matron was Mrs Howard. The hospital closed in 1919. The buildings were used as an open-air school until a new school was opened in 1937 on the same site. Two of these buildings still exist as the headquarters of Preston Sea Cadets on Strand Road. Their building is named 'T.S. (Training Ship) Galloway', named after the former President of the Voluntary Aid Association W.W. Galloway JP.

The work of the volunteer nurses was often physically and emotionally demanding and not for the faint-hearted; it was hard and tough. Nurse Ermyntude de Trafford kept a diary from 1916 to 1920 which was later published in 2001. Nurses worked long hours, often with distressing cases. Some soldiers arrived obviously dying; they were placed in a discrete palliative ward. Some were shellshocked and mentally disturbed; many were moved to Whittingham Asylum where some of them survived for years after 1918.

Trauma wound surgery was routine at Moor Park: amputations, shrapnel wounds, frostbite, crushed trench-buried men, appendectomies, and removing badly shrapnel-damaged eye balls. Nurse de Trafford assisted at eye operations recording that one 'was one of the most interesting and cleanest operations I've ever seen'. Nurses and other staff also took part in concert parties and other events to keep up morale. Local people collected funds for the Hospital: the Dick, Kerr Ladies football match in Christmas 1917 was to provide 'comforts' (cigarettes, chocolates, postage stamps etc.) for the Moor Park patients.

Nurse de Trafford, or 'Traffie', was born on 10 August 1883, a member of the old Catholic de Trafford family of Croston Hall. She enrolled as a VAD, aged 33, at Moor Park in April 1916. She enjoyed her work but the hours were long: on duty for 2,688 hours and for 2,496 hours in her first two years. In 1920 she was awarded, by King George V at Buckingham Palace, the Royal Red Cross Medal for her nursing work. After the Great War she lived with her brother Geoffrey at Croston Hall despite its deteriorating condition. He was known locally as 'The Captain'; she was 'Miss Ermy'. She bred rabbits and was an international judge at rabbit shows. She rode about on her old bicycle, occasionally visiting her sister Elfrida for holidays. Her riding a motor cycle, as a younger woman, had caused a local stir. She was well-known in Croston for her eccentric cloche hats, tweed skirt and thick brogues. She never married.

Linda Barton, the former Preston Historical Society Archivist, remembered visiting Miss Ermy when she was 12–14 years old. She was then very elderly but feisty; you had to watch your Ps and Qs. 'We always took her a present of cigarettes and a bag of sweets which she gratefully accepted. She lived in just one large downstairs room and I remember the fusty smell. She had a little terrier dog which always sat on her knee.' She died, aged 80, on 13 January 1964. She is buried in the family grave at Mawdesley, marked by a Cross taken from Croston estate. The Hall was later demolished in the mid-1960s, but there is a new road in Croston called De Trafford Place.



Nurse De Trafford (right) age 34, attends to a wounded soldier outside one of the wards.

Image: Preston Digital Archive.

Rocket returns



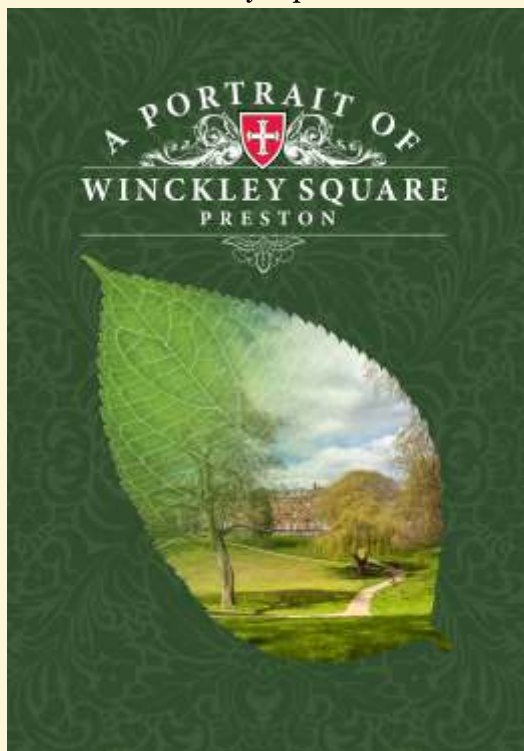
Did you know that the original 1829 Rocket steam locomotive, designed by George Stephenson, has returned to Lancashire? It's on display, for free, at Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, Liverpool Road, until 25 September 2019. Passengers on the recently electrified line from Preston to Manchester via Wigan pass over Chat Moss along the pioneer line engineered by Stephenson.

Diary dates

PHS talks in 2019 include Stewart Turner *The little house on the corner* (4 February); Dr Alan Crosby *The History of Alston Hall* (4 March); Stephen Sartin *As others saw it* (8 April); and Dr Robert Poole *Preston and the Peterloo Massacre* (13 May). All start at 7.15pm. Friends of Lancashire Archives are having *A Reet Good Do: 19th-century Broadside ballads and Lancashire dialect songs* performed by Jennifer Reid on Friday 7 December 2018 at 7.00pm at Bow Lane Records Office. In 2019 there is a Workshop by Dr Alan Crosby, local historian, on Thursday 7 March 2–4pm £10; a talk by Graham Holton about *Tithe documents: what they are and what they tell us* on Thursday 28 March 2pm £7; and on Friday 10 May 7pm Dr Jonathan Healey talks about *The Origins of the Poor Law in Lancashire* £13 (including wine and buffet supper). UCLan is celebrating 190 years of higher education in Preston. Dr Keith Vernon has written a new history of UCLan launched on 21 November. There's a display about *UCLan history* in Livesey House café and exhibition space, 6 Heatley Street, Preston. Further details can be found on the UCLan website in the 'Events' section.

A Portrait of Winckley Square, Preston

will be published in December 2018 by the Winckley Square Press.

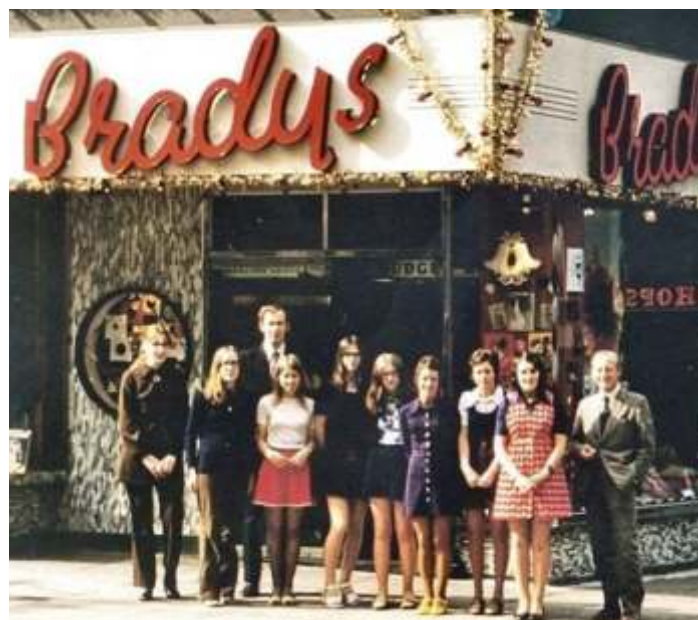


Limited edition hardback **£25**
paperback edition **£15**

Both prices include postage.

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Do you remember?



Brady's record shop was on the corner of Crystal House. This was where you came for the latest vinyl records and cassettes reviewed in the Melody Maker. Groovy mini-skirted staff pose outside in 1972. They were, left to right, Nancy Place, June Iddon, Neil Farrell (manager), Pauline Gibson nee James (in red skirt), Heather Collinson, Kathy Crook, Eileen Carr, Elaine Whiteside, Margaret Kennedy and Mr Brady, the shop's owner. Swinging!

Mary Slater's red plaque



Aragon Front, Spain, 1937. Mary Slater is front row second left.

Working Class Movement Library, Salford

You've heard of blue plaques. Preston now has a red plaque commemorating Mary Elizabeth Slater (1903–1983). It was unveiled on 16 June 2018, in the Peace Garden, off Friargate. Who was she? When the Spanish Civil War broke out she, a trained nurse, volunteered to the Spanish Medical Aid Committee to aid the anti-Franco Republican forces. She worked on the Aragon Front from September 1936: training nurses, running clinics, nursing wounded soldiers, and preparing field hospitals. She stayed in Spain until August 1938 when the International Brigade was



demobilised. She returned to nursing in Britain, serving in London during the Blitz, and then moved home to Preston. She was matron of the Ribblesdale Day Nursery and then transferred to Deepdale Hospital until she retired. Her home was 27 Ephraim Street, off London Road.

As a young woman, age 23 in 1926, she was a member of a delegation from the Preston Labour League of Youth to the USSR. She met and had black tea with Leon Trotsky, who spoke good English. Her group went on to Kharkov where they met Lancashire engineers installing looms in a cotton spinning factory.

Peterloo film

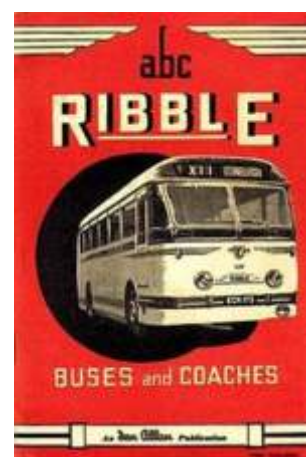


Mike Leigh's new film *Peterloo*, about the 1819 attack on a public meeting in Manchester, features Preston's MP, Henry 'Orator' Hunt, played by Rory Kinnear. It is now on general release and it has had good reviews.

Quiz answer

In the last issue we asked – 'What empire started, a hundred years ago, at Gregson Lane on 15 May 1919?'

The great empire that began in Gregson Lane in March 1919 was the first bus service run by Preston-based Ribble Motor Services. From such a modest start the company went on to dominate local bus services from Carlisle to the suburbs of Liverpool and Manchester, employing thousands of staff. In some remote village of Westmorland you might



come across a crimson bus with the office address 'Frenchwood Avenue, Preston' on its side. The company survived nationalisation but eventually it was privatised and taken over and sub-divided by Stagecoach in 1989. The empire, founded a century ago, lasted seventy years.