

Avice Pimblett OBE: honoured with a Blue Plaque



A Blue plaque, outside 7 Ribblesdale Place, for Avice Margaret Pimblett was unveiled by Mayor Neil Darby on 2nd November 2023. She was a woman of 'Preston firsts': first woman Town Councillor, first woman Alderman and first woman Mayor. She had a major impact on the lives of Prestonians, concerning herself particularly with women and children's social, educational and welfare issues.



The 'Representation of the People' Act in 1918 changed the lives of many women. For the first time women could vote if they were over 30 and met a property qualification. Avice's local social activity over many years was recognised by the voters of the Fishwick Ward and she became the first female councillor in 1920. Her public service was recognised by her peers when she became the first woman mayor in 1933. It is sad that her husband died in 1938 before, in the same year, she was awarded an OBE for her public service to Preston.



Avice Pimblett: Harris Museum, Art Gallery & Library

She served on Preston's Town Council for over 40 years and retired in 1861. Two years later she died at the age of 83.

Susan Douglass, FoWS, researched Avice's story which had been forgotten over time. FoWS and PHS thought she was deserving of a Blue Plaque and Frank Whittle Partnership kindly sponsored it.

FINAL TALKS OF THE SEASON 2023

6 February: Alan Crosby
**Music in a Lancashire country house:
 Rufford Hall in the 1730's**

6 March: Patricia Harrison
Three Women who Shaped Preston

3 April: Dr Ian Saunders
Maps of Lancashire And their Makers

8 May: Dr Janet Graffius
The Stonyhurst Collection



Merry Christmas,
 we look forward to seeing you in 2023



Preston Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

PROMOTING THE STUDY OF LOCAL HISTORY IN PRESTON AND LANCASHIRE

Issue 21

Winter 2022

Sartin's Challenge

Stephen Sartin, in the first talk of the season 'Prints of Old Preston', issued a challenge to his audience. He used the print 'Preston from the North 1829' which, according to Stephen, was completed around 1833-34. Intriguingly, Stephen admitted not knowing where the artist was positioned. He asked if anybody could shed light on this mystery. So, there we have it! **Can anybody suggest where the artist, Mr. W. Westall, was sitting?**

Stephen did give a few pointers to help in this investigation by indicating important features: - the church to the left is St John's, later demolished and rebuilt with a spire, known today as the Minster. The church to the right is Holy Trinity, Shaw Street, founded 1815. These and their position



Preston from the north: W. Westall A.R.A: Preston Digital Archive

relative to the windmills should help to calculate Mr. Westall's position on the day. The PHS team have come to their own conclusions, but we won't divulge our views until we have seen what our readers think. Good Luck! Please share your thoughts with Stewart. stewart@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

About the PHS

PHS was founded in 1948 with an annual membership subscription of 10/6d or half a guinea. 2023 will be our 75th Jubilee which we hope to celebrate with you. The aim of PHS is to promote the study of local history in Preston and Lancashire through a programme of talks given by local historians. Talks are held in the Central Methodist Church, Lune St. The annual member subscription is £15.00. Visitors £5.00 per talk. There are eight talks in each season.



Interesting in volunteering? As you know PHS is a registered charity and has been in existence for nearly 75 years. Long may this continue but we need more volunteers to help us be the best we can be in serving members and the wider community. If you are interested in the different roles we need contact patricia@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk or give a her a ring on 017813 213 629 to chat about how you might get involved.

Contact PHS

General enquiries: stewart@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

Membership: patricia@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk



PrestonHistoricalSociety

www.prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

What's in a name?

Ever wondered about the origin of your street name?

At times the choice seems almost random: Crown Street; Elm Street; Rose Avenue etc. Other names are obviously inspired by the destination of a road or physical/constructed features: Woodplumpton Road; Lower Bank Road; Aqueduct Street. Many are inspired by local dignitaries and the great and good from times gone by: Pedder¹ Street; Talbot² Road, and Havelock³ Street to name but three.

It was this question, and this latter group, that came to mind in December 2021 when PHS Helpdesk received a request from a Mr Trower in the Home Counties, after he had discovered the PHS Facebook page. While researching his family and never having been to Preston, he discovered there was a 'Trower Street' in Preston. Trower Street, built in the 1880s, is situated off Manchester Road, down from Cardinal Newman College. He wondered if any of his ancestors had ever lived in Preston.

Our first thought was that, as many streets were named after local luminaries, we should search for 'Trower' within their ranks. A search of online parish records and Business/street directories proved fruitless. No 'Trower' ever lived in Preston at this time. So, when all else failed we turned to Google

Then we found a clue to the origins of the street names. We found websites that referred to '2nd Lieutenant Alfred Bence Trower a World War 1 hero who died

29 May 1918, age 37'. A scrutiny of the A-Z of Preston showed that 'Trower' Street runs perpendicular to 'Bence' Road. Surely this could be no coincidence!

Could Alfred be the key to this puzzle?

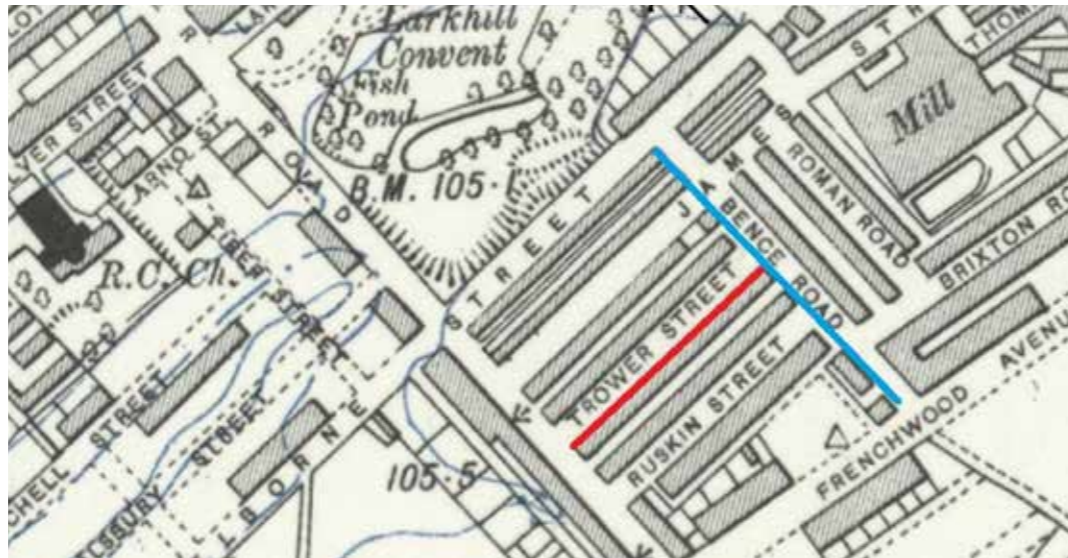
Alfred Bence-Trower was born in London in 1880 to London Wine Merchant Percy Trower and Agnes Marian Bence. Agnes was the daughter of Henry Alexander Starkie Bence a wealthy Suffolk landowner. Henry, in turn, was the son of Henry Bence-Bence (so good they named him twice) and Elizabeth Susanna Starkie. This is where it gets interesting. Her parents' 1815 marriage record shows that Elizabeth was

daughter and heir of Nicholas Starkie, Esq, of Preston. Eventually, Henry Alexander Starkie Bence inherited these lands, and on his death in 1881, Agnes Marian Bence Trower became one of his heirs.

A study of Preston Borough Council's Building Control Plans (1850-1974) held in Lancashire County Archives showed that the earliest developments on Trower Street were 1888/89. As historian David Hunt says:

'It was the general practice for the landowner to retain ownership of the ground on which the usually terraced houses were built, providing a significant expense for their tenants as well as a lucrative source of income for themselves as 'ground rents'⁴.

So, it would seem reasonable to suggest that the new owners, Percy and Agnes Bence Trower decided either to sell off or develop some or all of their inheritance as landlords, and the streets were named in their honour. Thus, it is not only the great and the good who are honoured in street names, but also those who owned the land on which they were built.



Trower Street (in red), and Bence Street (in blue). Larkhill Convent is now Cardinal Newman College: A-Z Preston

¹.Richard Pedder Mayor of Preston, 1748 & 56, sons Thomas, Mayor 1777 & Edward, 1763, 70, & 76

². John Talbot (1791-1852), 16th Earl of Shrewsbury. Financed the founding of many Catholic schools (including the Talbot School in Preston).

³. Major-General Sir Henry Havelock KCB (1795 – 1857), fought in India and Afghanistan.

⁴. David Hunt, a history of Preston, (Lancaster, 2009), p. 142

All Our Yesterdays

Here is a question for those of us of more 'mature' years. PHS recently received the following query from Eric Frazer of Elwood, Victoria, Australia.

*'I am hoping that you or one of your members might have some information about stamp vending machines introduced for *Rates payment by Preston Council around 1963, or by Horwich Council in 1964. The machines were supplied by Savings Services Ltd of London and dispensed 2/- (two shillings) stamps'*



Is there anyone out there who can remember purchasing stamps, such as the one illustrated, from a vending machine, and then pasting the stamps into a book, either for yourselves or for your parents to pay their *Rates by instalments?

Any memories of these stamps, can be shared by emailing: stewart@prestonhistoricalsociety.org.uk

We would love to hear from you!

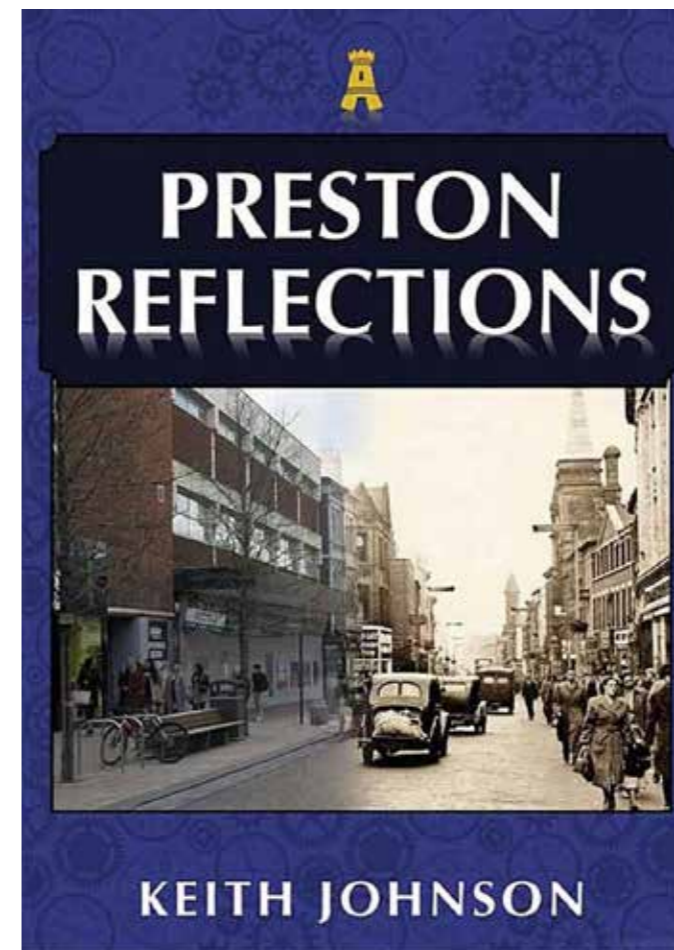
**Rates, a means of collecting local taxes from householders had been around in one form or other since The Poor Relief Act 1601. Briefly superseded by the much-reviled Community Charge (AKA Poll Tax) in 1990, which in turn was quickly replaced by today's Council Tax.*

BOOK NEWS

PRESTON REFLECTIONS by Keith Johnson

Review by Patricia Harrison

Amberley Publishing 2022 ISBN 978-1-3981-0442- 6
£15.99



Preston has a rich history as a cotton town that, fortunately, was captured on camera. In 'Preston Reflections' Keith presents a fascinating visual chronicle, reflecting on the endeavours and achievements of bygone generations that made the city we know today. This book shows readers glimpses of Preston past and present. It reflects periods of poverty, progress and prosperity, and displays of pomp, pageantry and patriotism. Every image tells its own story. The images featured ingeniously merge historic and modern scenes into one view, reflecting the changes through time in a unique way. Each enables the reader to linger in the past and compare the present. Viewing the old with the contemporary images reveals layers of history perhaps half-forgotten yet central to the lives of earlier generations. This superb collection cleverly mirrors life in Preston today and in bygone times allowing us to step into others' shoes and see the world as those long gone saw it.