

WINCKLEY SQUARE TIMES

Friends of Winckley Square

Throughout the lockdown Tony has been hard at work in all weathers. The Gardens have been a popular place for people to stroll and, when permitted, meet friends. As can be seen in the photo, Lockdown has given many of us more time to stop in the Gardens to look and to savour the natural world around us. Made better by Tony's efforts.

Over a year has passed since we ran any events in Winckley Square but we've kept busy. Late last year we spent a great deal of time producing our short film '**A Winckley Christmas Cracker!**' It was a great success with over 2,000 viewings on YouTube. Heritage Open Days heard about the production and wrote about it on their blog.

www.heritageopendays.org.uk/blog/christmas-in-the-square

One of our excellent FoWS actors was Beth Nolan who features in this issue, she is a newly recruited FoWS.

We have been unable to run our heritage walks around the Square but some of us have been busy giving Zoom presentations to a wide range of groups. We will continue these for as long as there is demand. We'll resume the guided tours as soon as it's safe to do so.

I was hoping to be the bearer of good news and be able to announce this summer's events in the Gardens but as yet we cannot make plans. I'm afraid the **Preston Jazz & Improvisation Festival** will be online only this year so the Winckley Square event planned for the 5th June will not happen. We are hoping to have an event in the summer which will celebrate the end of lockdown. Fingers crossed it is possible.

We are hoping to recruit a FoWS who might manage our website for us. So, if you have the skills and interest please ring or email me.

Patricia Harrison

Chair of Friends of Winckley Square

Email: patricia@winckley.org.uk

www.winckleysquarepreston.org

Issue 20 | May/ June 2021

Meet Beth Nolan

I was born in Penwortham and went to Penwortham Priory Academy where my passion for acting began. I enjoyed performing in school shows and in my final year I plucked up the courage to audition for the role of Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz. When I learned that I had got it the adrenaline flowed. It was a fantastic experience which really boosted my confidence and convinced me it was something I wanted to do as a career.



I studied at Runshaw College on the Professional Performance Programme (PPP) which was a brilliant course and went on to The Academy of Live and Recorded Arts. I graduated with a BA 1st Class Hons in Acting in 2018. Since graduating I have been involved in a number of projects and was particularly delighted to get involved with the Friends of Winckley Square. I have very happy childhood memories of the Square and a particular interest in Edith Rigby so I was delighted to be able to write and produce a documentary about her for the Harris which is on their social media pages.

Last year when the FoWS decided to produce a short film to celebrate Christmas I was fortunate to be asked to play Annie Budden, a young woman of similar age to me, who died in Nathaniel Miller's dentist chair (the Miller responsible for the building of the Miller Arcade in the middle of Preston). It's a very sad story but I also had to inject humour to make people smile at Christmas. I enjoyed figuring out how to present Annie. It was challenging in many ways not least as all the actors had to work in isolation due to Lockdown. We were all delighted by the reviews of the production and the numerous requests to produce more Winckley Square characters on film - I know I will be first in line if FoWS do.


Aside from acting and writing, I love to play my ukulele, draw and create comedy songs with my best friend. I'm also a part of The Harris Young Producers (HYPe).

Interested in volunteering to help at events, joining our **Research Group**, or being placed on our mailing list to receive newsletters and details of events? Please email enquiries@winckley.org.uk

**Friends of
Winckley
Square**

 @WinckleySquare

 Friendsofwinckleysquaregardens

 We love seeing your photos of the Square; tag [#friendsofwinckleysquare](https://www.instagram.com/friendsofwinckleysquare) on Instagram.

The Old Tram Bridge Past, Present and Future?

The original wooden Tram Bridge: Tinted postcard extract: Derek Carwin Collection courtesy of Heather Crook

by Steve Harrison

It's exciting news that a 'Friends of the Old Tram Bridge' group is established and aiming to ensure that future generations enjoy the same walking and cycling route from Avenham to Walton that locals have used for 200 years. In [Issue 17 Newsletter](#) we told, in brief, the story of evidence of the Tramway locally, here we are adding a little more about its origins.

There was a great burst of canal construction in Britain from the 1770s. Investment in canals seemed to offer a better return on capital than on turnpike roads. In Lancashire, industrialisation was well under way. The county's coalfields could supply the fuel for the new steam engines that were about to transform the workshops.



Navvies at work on the Manchester Ship Canal 35 miles excavating by hand: National Maritime Museum

What became the Leeds-Liverpool canal was earlier planned to join Liverpool to Hull and to be routed via Preston and the valley of the Ribble. That route was rejected. Landowners in the north of the county then pressed for a canal to link Lancaster with the eventual Leeds-Liverpool canal south of Preston. They had Limestone to transport south and coal would be carried north. Limestone was needed in industrial centres for iron production as well as for building and agriculture. Cannel coal was ideal for gas production. Steve Barritt tells us in his excellent book 'The Old Tram Road' that Preston needed 20,000 tons of coal a year for its factories.

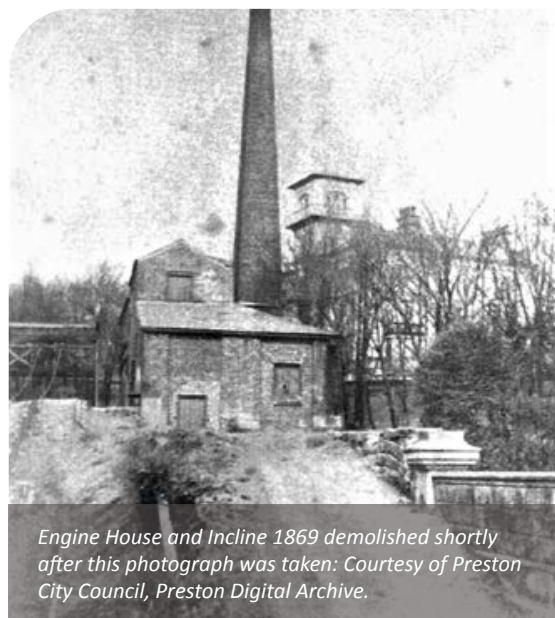


Lancaster Aqueduct carrying the Leeds Liverpool Canal over the River Lune: Lancaster Canal Trust.

The floodplain of the Ribble caused the greatest problem for the engineers who were given the task of designing a canal route from Kendal to the Leeds Liverpool canal. Various schemes were proposed including an aqueduct across the Ribble similar to the magnificent stone structure that carries the canal over the Lune. Cost was the stumbling block. So instead of a waterway linking the gap between the wharves at Preston canal basin and the Walton Summit canal wharves, there would be a tramway with horse drawn trams.

Two issues needed to be resolved. The first was how to carry the tramway across the Ribble and the second how to enable the heavy loads to travel uphill on both sides of the Ribble valley. A canal would have had locks but horses can't pull heavy loads up steep inclines. Walton Summit is approximately 60m above sea level.

Steam engines provided the solution to the inclines. Static engines powered the haulage of the waggons up the inclines. The steepest was the one on the Avenham side of the river. The engine house was located where the Belvedere now stands and its chimney can be seen clearly on many early images.



Engine House and Incline 1869 demolished shortly after this photograph was taken: Courtesy of Preston City Council, Preston Digital Archive.

The Tram Bridge, erected in 1802, was intended as a temporary measure. Money was tight but the ambition of a stone aqueduct had not been abandoned. As it was meant to be temporary there was a reluctance to spend, even on maintenance. So the simple wooden design became the long term design. The dream of the aqueduct was finally shattered by the coming of the steam railways. The glory days of the canals were numbered.



The Tram Bridge c 1864: Robert Pateson, Preston Digital Archive. The chain ran between the housing drum on the bridge to the upper drum located to the left of the Engine House at the top of the incline.

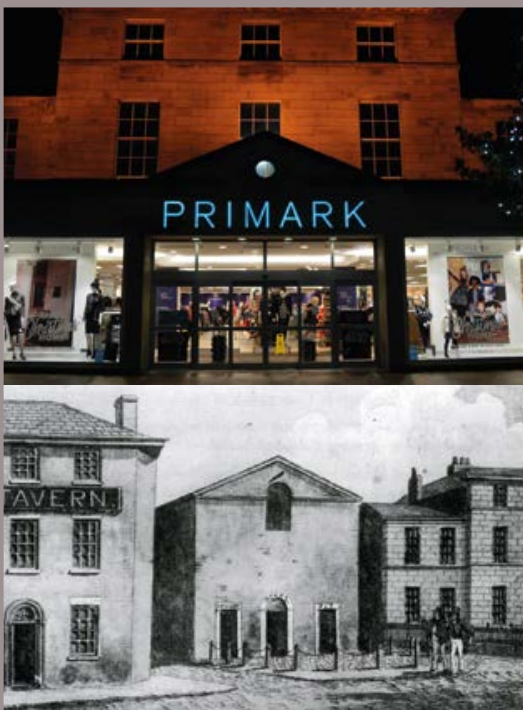
Steve Barritt recounts that when the waggons stopped running the bridge was still used as an amenity by people living on both sides of the Ribble but it had fallen into serious disrepair. So much so that in 1872 Preston Corporation purchased the bridge.



Tram Bridge minus timber decking 1946 which had been removed for the duration of the war to block any German advance. Harris Museum, Art Gallery and Library.

The bridge was maintained in much better condition as a wooden structure by the Corporation until it was replaced in 1936 by a concrete structure which nonetheless kept broadly to the design of the earlier bridge.

The engineer responsible for the tramway was William Cartwright. The next time you are in Fishergate look up above the frontage of Primark and you will see the façade of the Georgian home Cartwright had built around 1802.



Primark: Tony Worrall.

Theatre Royal Painting by J Foreman 1854 includes Cartwright's home to the right. The original is at the Harris Museum, Art Galley and Library.

It would be hard to understate the importance of the Old Tram Bridge for the transformation of Preston from a Society Town in the 18th Century to a cotton industrial centre in the 19th. Access to the coalfields and markets was a vital factor in the concentration of the cotton industry in Lancashire. Nowhere else in the world was there to be such a concentration. In continental Europe steam powered textile mills developed after the introduction of the railways; they could be located anywhere the rails went. The Lancashire cotton industry pre-dates the railways and its growth was accelerated by coal and canals. The Rochdale canal at Ancoats and the Weavers' Triangle in Burnley demonstrate the importance of reliable cheap transport for fuel and raw materials. Without the link to the canal network at Walton Summit Preston would not have proved as attractive to factory owners. For good or ill our heritage is tied to the Old Tram Road and its Bridge.

In 2017 a total of 53 million pounds was spent on a Garden Bridge over the Thames. No bridge was ever constructed. For a fraction of that money The Old Tram Bridge could be rebuilt and last for another 200 years. Londoners would be welcome to travel to Preston, stay at the refurbished Park Hotel, buy parched peas at one of our events and promenade across the bridge Free of Charge.



By Pete Wilkinson



Pete decided to take photographs of the state of the bridge from underneath. The last assessment was done 2 years ago so it is important to know what deterioration has taken place.

Preston's unique and iconic 'Old Tram Bridge' was closed, at short notice, in February 2019 following an inspection that concluded that 'it could collapse without warning'. During the following months it was finally decided that Preston City Council were the owners and as such responsible for the structure.

There followed a brief period where individuals were asking the council what was happening and what their intentions were. It was at this point that Michael Nye became involved and started a Facebook group which took the name 'Friends of the Old Tram Road Bridge'. To date we have over 2,200 members and the number continues to rise! Over the last 18 months, mainly due to Covid19 restrictions, the group has struggled to maintain its momentum and the bridge remains closed.

In January 2021 it was decided to invite further members onto the committee and hold regular Zoom meetings. The committee has started the year with renewed vigour and a determination to get the bridge opened! We understand the financial constraints under the present climate and hope to work closely with PCC to find a solution. We hope to fundraise, initially to have a specialist independent survey and then, depending on the outcome, to raise further funds to complete the recommendations. Our next step will probably be to apply for charitable status to enable us to apply for grants etc.

On a personal level I volunteered to be the Friends of Winckley Square's representative on the committee and I started by contacting many of our local historians and asking for their support, I have had a very good response. Along with thousands of others I have been using the Tram Bridge for over 70 years. Living in Penwortham and having grandparents in Frenchwood it became the regular route, especially in summer.



*The wooden bridge was replaced with this concrete structure in 1936.
Paul Rushton, Preston Photographic Society.*

It would be an absolute travesty if Preston were to lose yet another unique and iconic structure, one which has stood proudly over the Ribble for over 200 years!

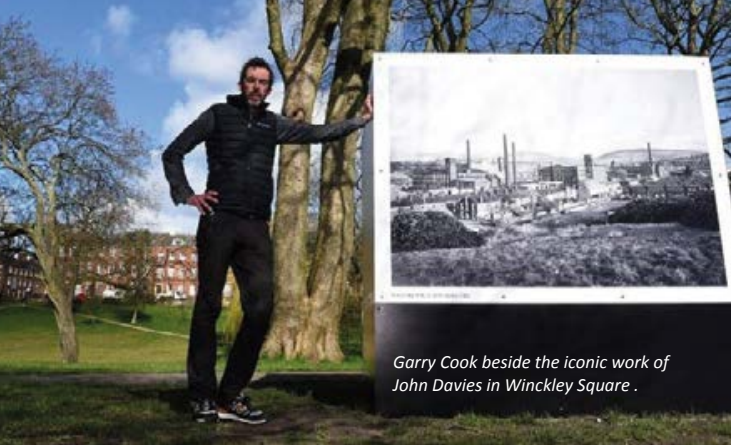


Preston Digital Archive: Tinted postcard c 1905 Lochinvar N&C and entrance from South Ribble which appears in WHITTLE-LE-WOODS to PRESTON walk 7.25 mls taking 2.5 – 3hrs.

I hope you decide to give us your support and even join our Facebook group.

Pete Wilkinson, 2021.

Email: peter@friendsoftrambridge.org



Garry Cook beside the iconic work of John Davies in Winckley Square.

Free photo exhibition in Preston City Centre

by Garry Cook

There's a unique outdoor photography exhibition in Preston's streets until 23rd May organised by Garry Cook.

On your walk around town why not amble around the streets and take in the work of award winning photographers and some novice snappers who have attended Garry's workshops?

Large stand-alone photo installations feature in Winckley Square with other projects displayed on walls and shopfronts around the city centre. The work of dozens of local photographers are shown on the hoardings of Preston Market, plus projects by Blackpool Sixth Form students and Preston Photographic Society.

All images can be viewed from the street, in a safe, socially-distanced way.



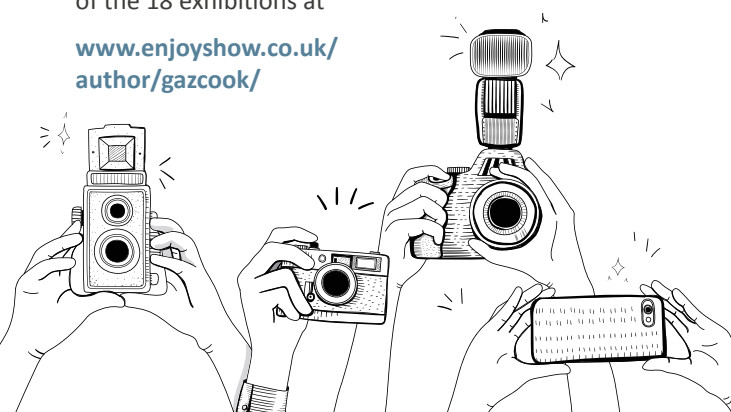
Bernie Blackburn beside his exhibition of Preston Guild 2012 (Lancaster House, Lancaster Road).

A big **'thank you'** to Garry for making our city centre a more interesting place. He says:

"I've organised the festival – in the hope that it can become a regular event in the city; displaying the work of photographers from around the world."

You can download the exhibition location map and details of each of the 18 exhibitions at

www.enjoyshow.co.uk/author/gazcook/



Beth Nolan

- one of our many talented young Friends of Winckley Square

We have no doubt that you will be seeing more of Beth in the future. She's a very talented, creative young woman. Since graduating in 2018 she has been involved in Manchester based theatre. Performing in JB Shorts Reloaded, The Bolton Museum LGBTQ Monologues: Jolly Good Luck To The Friends Of Vesta Tilley by Abi Hynes Moment and even in a puppet show for The Greater Manchester Fringe!



Beth as Vesta Tilley, one of Britain's most famous male impersonators. In 1919 she became Lady de Frece, as a knighthood had been bestowed on her husband, Walter De Frece.



Beth playing Annie Budden in front of the green screen at rtstudio during the production of 'A Winckley Christmas Cracker!' The backdrops were added during the editing stage.

We first met Beth when she was planning to produce a short film about Edith Rigby for the Harris. Beth wrote the script and presented the documentary. Other young people involved were Francesca Warburton who played Edith Rigby, Beth Turnbull and Patrick Nolan helped with voice overs and Emma Sinnett, filmed and co- edited the film with Beth Nolan. FoWS advised on content and supplied some of the props. Beth then played one of the characters in the 'Winckley Christmas Cracker!'



Photo: Paul Rushton

Tony's Update!

Spring has sprung and all is well with the world, or has it?

As I'm writing this the weather is playing its usual tricks. After a few days of not just warm, but actually hot sunshine with its associated feel good factor, there is a real promise of things to come. The Gardens seem to move forward overnight with spots of colour appearing here and there; we get excited; there's an urge to speed things up and start planting out. Then winter wags its tail and we get what, to any new plants or delicate blooms, is a killing frost. We are again reminded of the Hawthorn May flower and overcoats... ?

One thing we learn, as gardeners, is to be a little hesitant and not always to rush ahead just because we can.

Another trait that gardeners exhibit is eternal optimism, the grass is greener... and what we plant will grow, hopefully. For our peace of mind we also develop a long term, relaxed outlook on life, accepting that not everything we plant will grow, no matter how frustrating!

So we plan and look to the future while literally working with that nice rich earth, grounded in the past.

Based on last year, here are some images of what we can hope to see in the coming months?

So... take a walk on the Winckley wild side...



Arum lily



Allium Christophii



Himalayan Blue Poppy



Alliums Purple Sensation and buttercups



Ox-eye Daisies

Photographs: Tony Lewis

So please Enjoy the Space; Respect all Things; Time to Reflect: Stay Safe.



Photo: Steve Harrison

The **Easter butterfly installation** on the railings of Winckley Square Gardens is the result of a collaboration between local artist, Sarah Hicks, and 31 primary schools from across Preston. Commissioned by Preston City Council. The installation follows on from the hugely popular egg installations in Avenham Park since 2017.



Find Sarah on her social media page.