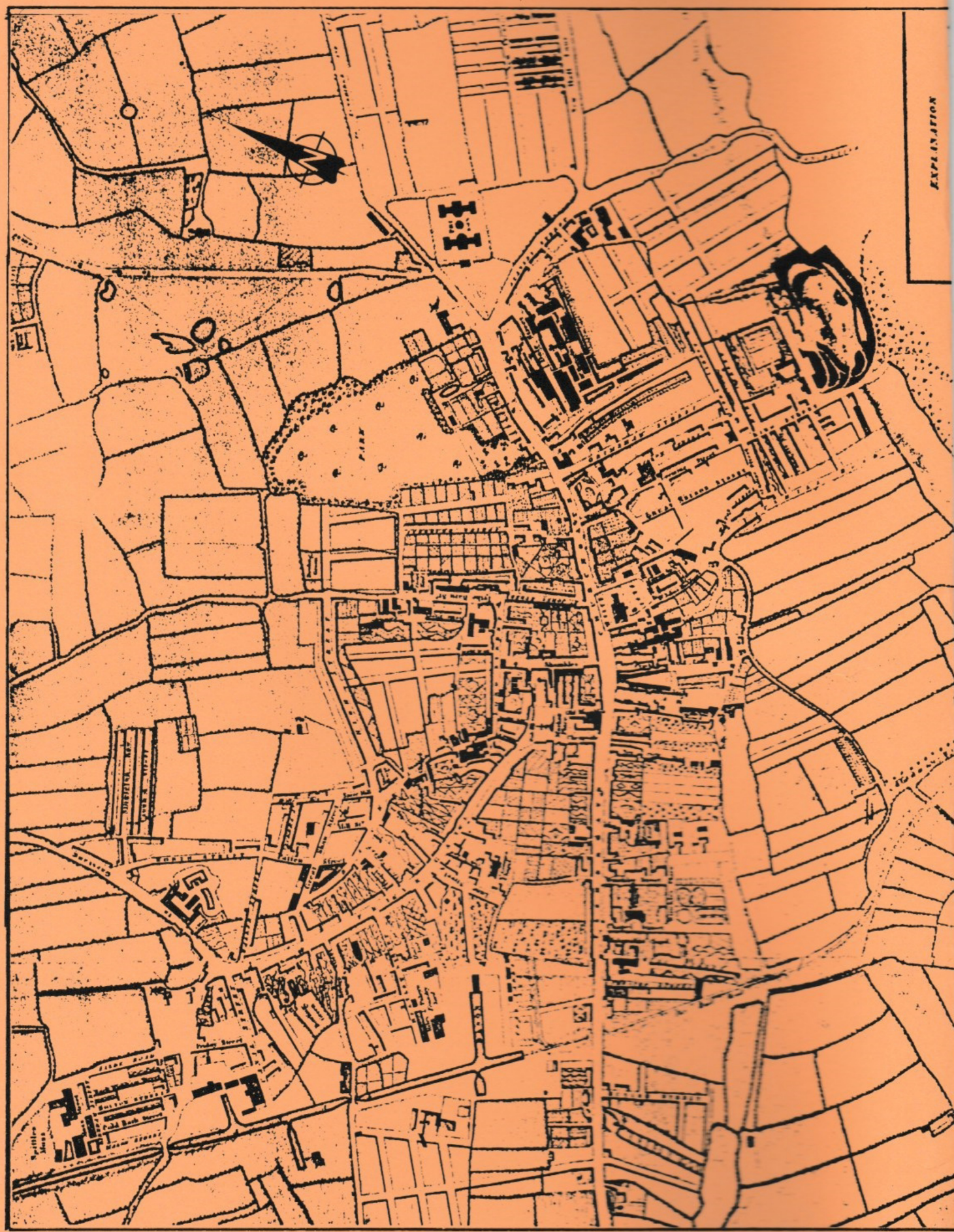
VANISHED DWELLINGS

Early Industrial Housing in a Lancashire Cotton Town Preston

by

Nigel Morgan

WILLIAM SHAKESHAFT'S MAP OF PRESTON IN 1809 (much reduced)



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Abbreviations

CBP	County Borough of Preston
HL	Harris Library
HM	Harris Museum and Art Gallery
LCM	Lancashire County Museum
LEP	Lancashire Evening Post
PBC	Preston Borough Council

References in the text to footnotes at the end (on page 68) are shown in square brackets thus: [ ].

PREFACE

While working at the Preston Curriculum Development Centre in 1982 I wrote a booklet about housing in Victorian Preston, principally for school teachers and their pupils. Although the part of it which covered the second half of the 19th century contained a lot of interesting and useful information, including some sources which were not previously known about, I soon realised that the part dealing with the first half of the century was completely inadequate. Since then I have therefore tried to investigate the first half of the century as thoroughly as I had previously covered the second half.

The new work concentrated on two very different subjects. The first was the workers' housing built in the first phase of the Industrial Revolution, especially the handloom weavers' cottages which had once been numerous in Preston, but which have all been demolished. The second was the fine collection of middle class houses which still survive in the south-west quarter of the town, though nowadays mostly used as offices rather than homes. The results of my discoveries threatened to make an entirely new book which would be much bigger and more expensive than the original had been, so I have decided to break it into three smaller parts, to be printed separately.

This, the first of the three, deals with the two types of housing which were peculiar to the first phase of the Industrial Revolution in Preston. The second will deal with middle class housing in the same period, with the astonishing contrasts in material standards of living which existed in the community at about the middle of the century, and with the accumulating filth and squalor which led to the introduction of the Public Health Act in 1850. The third book will continue from there, beginning with the organisation of the Town Council as the Local Board of Health in 1850, and following the ensuing story to the beginning of the 20th century - a life-or-death struggle between conflicting "Victorian values".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first version of this book was prepared in some haste for a meeting in November 1988, when I was in the midst of work for English Heritage in quite a different part of the country. My thanks and acknowledgements are therefore due first to all those who made the accelerated production possible. In particular I must thank the Listed Buildings section of English Heritage for allowing a three-week interruption of work in Surrey; and all those people who so kindly helped me to find or to copy material at very short notice, or gave permission for me to use it: the staff of the Harris Library (especially Terry Shaw), the Harris Museum and Art Gallery (especially Myna Trustram), the Lancashire County Museum (especially Ian Gibson); and Ken Hall, the County Archivist, and his staff.

For practical help or advice of various kinds I am indebted to Gordon Duerden in Computer Services at Lancashire Polytechnic, and to Peter Hornshaw of Preston ITec.

For help with my work in the more distant past (1982 to 1987) I owe thanks to more people than there is room to mention here, beginning with all those who contributed to the booklet published at the Teachers' Centre, especially Joy Wells (as she then was). Since then I have had advice and encouragement from Stefan Muthesius of the University of East Anglia, Anthony Quiney of Thames Polytechnic, Fiona Mackenzie of BBC TV Education, Margaret Sheridan and Diana Winterbottom of Lancashire County Library, Martin Robertson and Lucy Dewhurst of English Heritage, and Alistair Hodge of the Carnegie Press; and especially from Dr John Walton of the University of Lancaster, who kindly read and commented on the first meandering versions of my new material. In practical matters, I hope that the value of the help given by the editorial staff of the Lancashire Evening Post (finding their old photographs), by Peter Hadley in the conveyancing section of the Town Hall (finding deeds), and by Colin Wilson in the Engineer's Department (pointing out the Sewer Records), will be obvious from the nature of the book as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

Writing this book has been like one of those weird dreams where we start in a homely and familiar place, step through a doorway, and find ourselves somewhere quite different - unrecognisable, and neither homely nor familiar. The place is Preston. The doorway is a single stride back through almost two hundred years. The unfamiliar surroundings are the houses which no longer exist and which have been almost completely forgotten. Waking, we see familiar things in a new light.

Preston used to be one of the classic examples of a Lancashire cotton mill town. As long ago as 1854, when Charles Dickens used it as a model location for his novel Hard Times (under the pseudonym "Coketown"), it was regarded as the epitome of modern industrial towns. Even Dickens' Preston is a veil which we must pass through. He saw the second phase of the Industrial Revolution in the town, and the regimented housing which went with it - "the many small streets still more like one another". But this was housing of the cotton industry in its fully-mechanised maturity, when people went out to work in the mills.

The question which I was interested in was: what was it like before then, when many people worked in their own homes? Before there were Acts of Parliament and local bye-laws to dictate how houses should be built?

One sort of housing was the handloom weaver's cottage with its integral workshop, large numbers of which survive in recognisable form elsewehere in the county, mainly in the countryside. These have been thoroughly investigated by W.J.Smith and Geoffrey Timmins (among others), whose work is well known. The main subject of this book is the same, but its peculiar appeal is that hardly a single recognisable brick has survived. The handloom weavers' quarters of Preston are identifiable today only by the monumental tower blocks and inner "ring-road" which were built on their sites in the 1950s and 60s. Housing built for the relatively brief handloom-weaving phase of Preston's industrial history had a very distinctive character. Much of it was still standing - and still occupied - when the Environmental Health officers launched their assault on "slums" in the 1950s. Their interests were practical, and they probably did not understand the historical significance of the houses they condemned, nor record them before they were demolished.

The particular interests of this book are the character of the housing, and the means of finding out about it.

It is divided into three chapters, presented in two ways. The first is a descriptive character sketch of the changing economic and topographical history of Preston throughout the 19th century, particularly its cotton industry, in order to establish an historical context for what follows; and is generally unburdened with the "scholarly apparatus" of footnotes and so on. The second and third chapters deal in turn with two quite different forms of housing which resulted from the first phase of the Industrial Revolution; and in these, for the information and guidance of other students, I have tried to integrate the story of the research with the account of its results. This should make it easy for readers to spot my errors; and I shall be grateful if they would point them out to me.

Fig.1: Map of Lancashire in 1830, showing location of Preston

Chapter I

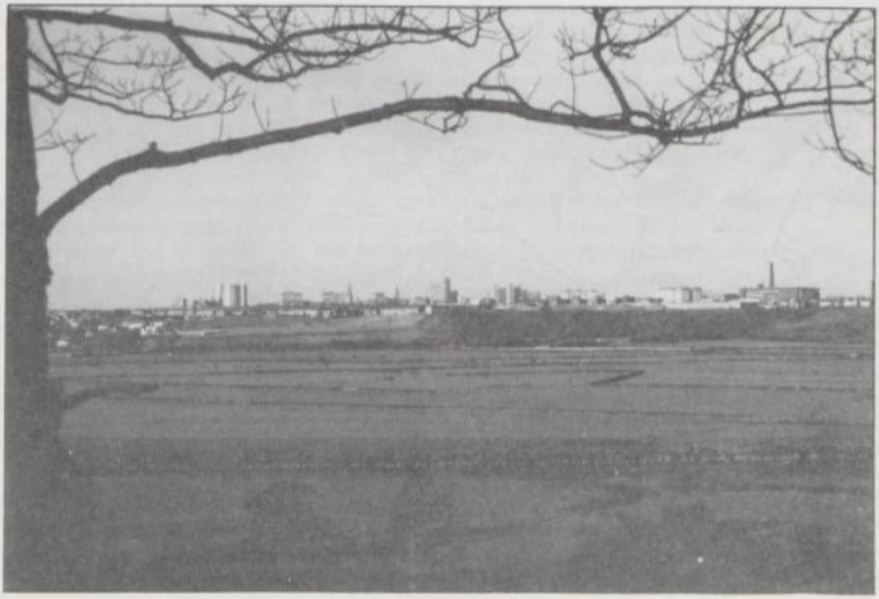
THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The site

The town of Preston is classically sited on the north bank of a large river - the Ribble - at its lowest bridging point, and near to the upper limit of tidal flow. It lies on the main line of travel between the north and the south of this side of England, with the Pennines to the east and the coastal mosslands to the west. Situated at about the mid-point of the County Palatine, and at the boundaries of three of its historic administrative divisions (the Hundreds of Blackburn, Leyland and Amounderness), it was a more convenient centre of administration, particularly for the various courts, than Lancaster itself. From the 18th century onwards, as the mosslands were drained and converted to the cultivation of grain and vegetables, and as the beef and dairy specialisations of the hilly areas developed, the town's importance as a market centre grew. Up to and including the 19th century, Preston was a place of cattle, carts, and lawyers' wigs.

Entering it from the south, even in the late 20th century, one still receives a dramatic impression of the difference between town and country. The town is raised a hundred feet or so above the level of the river valley, so that the bluff, lined with buildings, resembles an ancient city wall, with church spires, tower blocks, and the few surviving mill chimneys soaring above.

Fig.2: Preston from Walton-le-Dale, 1988



The site is an undulating plateau of glacial drift, mostly heavy clay, with an overlay of sand which in some places is thirty feet thick. This plateau is crossed by a few small brooks, which have etched little ravines for themselves. The clay was suitable for brick-making, the sand was good for drainage, the brooks were useful sources of water for the early steam-powered cotton mills, and the ravines served either as handy places to dump rubbish, or, if more thoughtfully adapted, as sewers.

Such were the advantages of the ancient centre of settlement, which lay about half a mile back from the river. On a low ridge running east to west, Churchgate and Fishergate formed a continuous street, with the market place on the north side of its centre, and the only other ancient thoroughfare, Friargate, winding its way north-westwards from one corner of this. In 1800 the maximum width of the built-up area was about a thousand yards from east to west, and slightly less from north to south. Between the town centre and the river was a brook, the Syke, and beyond that a brow divided into small narrow fields. To the west the land fell towards a northwards bend of the river, leaving a wide band of fields and a small common known as the Marsh. The land northwards and eastwards was likewise still in agricultural use, later fondly remembered by an elderly inhabitant as the "smiling fields and orchards" of his youth; and beyond the Moor Brook to the north there was a larger area of common land vaguely known as the Moor.

Fig.3: Map of Preston c.1800 [Hewitson, Preston Court Leet Records, 1905]

Fig.4: Demolition in Plungington, June 1982

The Cotton Industry and the Town

It can be painful and unsettling to see familiar rows of houses tumbled to sooty rubble by "clearance programmes". Terraced housing has seemed an immutable characteristic of northern industrial towns, because we forget how short the history of such places has been. Born into a world already made, we took it for granted. Born a century earlier, our great-great-grandfathers had no such settled view of their surroundings. Even a world-wide traveller, the historian James Bryce, was astonished by his experience of Lancashire in 1868:-

> "The county has, so to speak, taken a sudden leap out of one age into another . . . The speed with which this region has increased in wealth and population finds no parallel except in America or Australia, and the phenomena which have accompanied its growth are exactly those which are observed at this moment in our newest colonies. Towns have risen so fast as hardly to have yet become aware of their own existence: they are straggling and irregularly built, handsome piles mixed with hovels, public buildings extemporised in odd corners, big rambling shops in which, as in a backwoods store, everything is sold, from silks and notepaper at one counter to herrings and potatoes at the other. They are, in short, overgrown villages of 60,000 or 70,000 people." [1]

While the total population of England and Wales multiplied 3½ times, from 9 million at the beginning of the century to 32½ million at the end, that of Lancashire grew at almost double that rate, increasing from 673,486 in 1801 to 4,406,409 in 1901. And while in the country as a whole the balance between country dwellers and townsmen shifted from a large rural majority to an equally large urban majority, in Lancashire the scale and pace of the growth of towns was such as had never been seen before. Manchester and Liverpool became great world cities; urbanised villages like Chorley and Darwen became towns; and respectably middling-sized places such as Blackburn, Bolton, and Preston, which had between ten and fifteen thousand inhabitants at the beginning of the century, had reached about a hundred thousand each at its end. In Preston the

(Harris Museum and Art Gallery)

Fig.5: The South Prospect of Preston, by S. and P. Buck, 1728 [part]

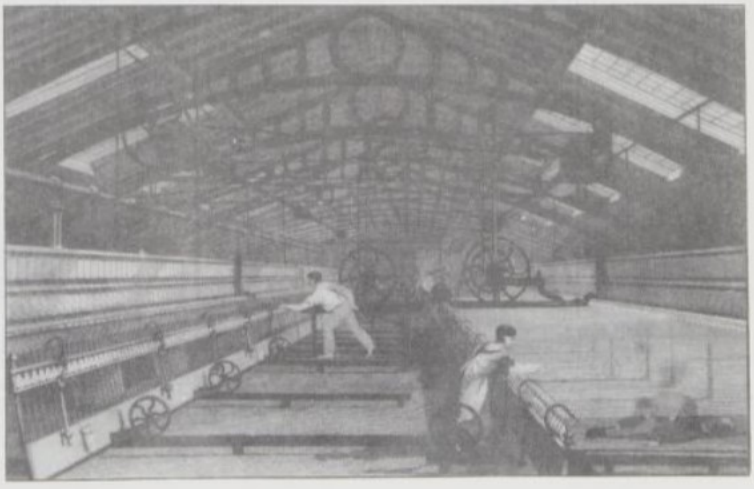
average addition of each decade throughout the 19th century was roughly equal to the whole population in 1801, but this growth was more explosive than tranquil averages suggest: between 1831 and 1851 the town's population more than doubled (33,000 to 68,000).

"Preston is a fine town", Daniel Defoe had written in his Tour about 1725, "and tolerably full of people, but not like Liverpoole or Manchester; besides, we come now beyond the trading part of the county. Here's no manufacture; the town is full of attornies, proctors, and notaries . . . Here is a great deal of good company . . ." Through the rest of the 18th century Preston continued to develop in this manner as a small and provincial, but nevertheless locally superior centre of Georgian society; and in 1795 it was characterised by Jonathan Aikin as "a handsome well-built town, with broad regular streets and many good houses ... rendered gay by assemblies and other places of amusement, suited to the genteel style of the inhabitants". [2]

Aikin had not noticed the little 3-storey "Yellow Factory" put up by John Horrocks in 1791, behind the houses at the east end of Church Street; but John Horrocks and his brother Samuel were men whose enterprise could not be overlooked for long. Within a few years they built two more mills here in the south-east corner of the town - Frenchwood Factory (1797) and Dale Street (1802); and two others near the newly-opened Lancaster Canal on the north-west side - Moss Factory (1796, and still standing) and Canal Factory (1799). The Horrocks brothers were only the first and the most successful of the men who were to make Preston one of the classic cotton towns of Lancashire. In 1825 there were sixteen mills in the town; and by 1841 about thirty, eleven of which had been built in the mid 1830's. But, if the Industrial Revolution had arrived in Preston, at this stage it was still very lop-sided.

In the early 19th century cotton spinning was a mechanised factory process, but weaving generally was not. The revolution in spinning had been made possible by James Hargreaves, a handloom weaver of Oswaldtwistle near Blackburn, who invented a machine or "engine" (nick-named "jenny") which could operate many spindles simultaneously; and by Richard Arkwright of Preston, who used a different method of achieving the same result, but better suited to being driven by water power, and therefore known as the "water frame". Each of these types of mechanised spinning was further developed. Arkwright's was eventually perfected elsewhere as the "throstle", but far more important in Preston was the hybrid machine known as the "mule", developed in 1779 by Richard Crompton from the principles of Hargreaves' jenny. The mule had hundreds of spindles fed by a wheeled carriage riding inwards and outwards. The yarn was spun during the extension and wound onto the spindles on each return journey. Until the invention of the "self-actor" mule, the carriage was driven by the spinner himself turning a wheel. Complicated and cumbersome though it appeared, the mule was an efficient machine of beautiful ingenuity (as anyone who has watched one at work will appreciate), capable of producing extremely fine yarn.

Fig.6: Mule spinning [Baines History of Cotton Cotton Manufacture]



According to the secretary of the Spinners' Union (reported in the Preston Chronicle in 1862), in 1842 there were 32 mills in Preston with a total of 490,102 spindles; two of these mills now used the new "self-actors", but all the others still relied on hand-mules, and all were worked by male spinners, at that date some 511 in all. These skilled and highly-paid men employed their own assistants, such as the "piecers" who crawled under the carriages to mend broken threads.

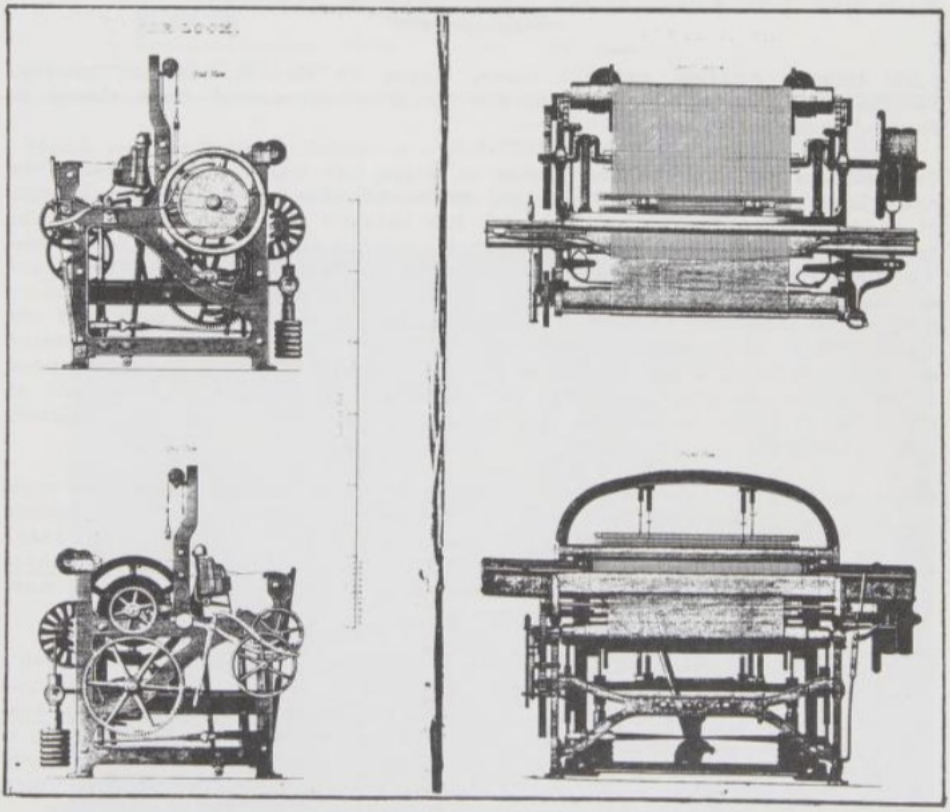
THE COTTON TRADE TWENTY AND THIRTY YEARS AGO.—Having lately furnished some statistics of the present position of the cotton trade in this town, we have been favoured with some particulars of the number of spinners and spindles in 1832 and 1842, from which some idea may be gained of the extension of the trade since that time. This return was got up with great care by the Short-time Committee. In 1842 there were very few self-actor mules in the town, only two mills then having them; in 1832 there were none.

Name of Firm or Mill.	No. of Spinners in 1832.	No. of Spindles in 1832.	No. of Spinners in 1842.	No. of Spindles in 1842.
Moor Lane Mill	8	5952	8	5952
Horrockses, Miller and Co., Yard Mill	29	16008	25	21712
" " Frenchwood Mill	12	8448	6	8920
" " Canal Mill	24	16896	24	16896
" " Moss New Mill	15	10496	13	16700
" " Moss Old Mill	14	5576	14	5576
John Paley, Stanley-street mill	22	15252	26	17222
Paley's Old Mill (Heatley-street)	22	12480	17	13308
" New Mill	12	9024	12	11452
" Worsted Mill	10	6240	5	8824
Ainsworth and Co.	36	27346	36	29234
F. Sleddon	12	8408	7	8712
J. Cooper	18	13260	18	13250
Oxendale's	16	11264	16	11264
Clayton and Co.	18	12928	18	12928
R. Gardner	39	43216	39	43216
Mr. Hodgett	17	12568	S. actors	11472
Horrocks and Jackson	10	6256	11	13728
R. Riley	9	6630	17	16282
Swainson, Birley, and Co.	36	26640	44	37210
P. Catterall, Sons, and Co.	19	16000	24	23996
Back Lane Mill	19	8800	Stopped	...
Water-street Mill	18	9676	Stopped	...
W. Taylor	...	...	15	18288
H. and A. Dawson	...	...	17	20184
Dawson's, Oxheys	...	...	S. actors	8880
Crankshaw and Smith	...	...	22	19112
Gardner and Crankshaw	...	...	17	17266
Grimshaw-street Mills	...	...	16	14572
R. Threlfall	...	...	18	20856
J. Hawkins	...	...	12	13350
J. and W. McGhee	...	...	14	15400
Total	434	309364	511	490102

Fig.7: Statistics of the cotton spinning trade of Preston in 1832 [Preston Chronicle, 19 March 1862]

Weaving, on the other hand, was about half a century behind. Although a power-driven loom had been invented in 1785 by the Reverend Edmund Cartwright, it required so much human intervention - to "dress" the threads, to propel the shuttle through the warp, and to spot faults - that it was an unreliable and risky investment for manufacturers of cloth. Only after the invention of "picking sticks" to throw the shuttle to and fro, in 1828, and other improvements to automatic operation made in Blackburn in 1841-42, could weaving be mechanised as reliably and profitably as spinning. There had been some intermediate stages of improvement, so that by the 1820 s it was obvious that power-loom weaving had come to stay, but it was not yet widespread. Hard-headed manufacturers bided their time, watching the fate of the early optimists. In 1832 a Preston grocer and tea-dealer went bankrupt: the auction of his possessions included, behind his shop at 106 Fishergate, "two large Buildings containing 159 Self Acting Looms". Another bankrupt, the spinner and manufacturer Francis Sleddon, seems to have suffered similarly from over-enthusiasm in 1844, when his Hanover Street mill contained 3,296 self-actor mule spindles, 8,720 hand mule spindles,

Fig.8: The power loom [Baines History of the Cotton Manufacture, 1835]



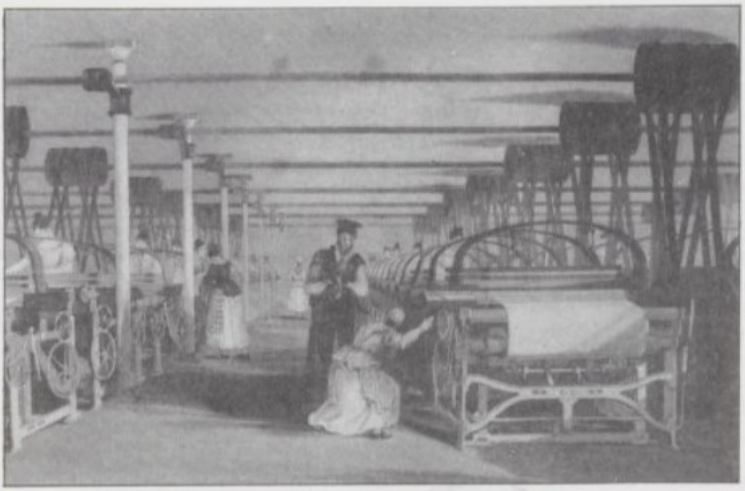


Fig.9: Power loom weaving [Baines History of Cotton Manufacture]

6,000 throstle spindles, and 525 looms. Maybe Mr Sleddon was just unlucky, because his bankruptcy occurred at the height of the second great change in Preston's cotton industry.

The railways had arrived. The Preston to Wigan line was opened in 1838; then came lines to Lancaster, to Fleetwood, and to Longridge (these latter two parts of an attempt to form a cross-country link between the west and east coasts, forestalled by an alternative route through Blackburn); the link to Bolton and Manchester in 1841; to Blackburn in 1846; and finally to Liverpool in 1849. Oats and hay were giving way to coal as the principal fuel of transport. At the same time the first serious attempts to exploit Preston's position at the head of the Ribble estuary by developing it as a port were initiated; and with such apparent success that in 1845 the new quay was "so thronged that the schooners were obliged to lie two deep", while in 1848 thousands of spectators lined the bank of the river to watch the arrival of the first 300 ton vessel from New Orleans, laden with cotton and corn.

In the mid 1840 s came the greatest burst of industrial expansion which the town has ever seen. Seventeen new mills were built, prompting one of the leading citizens to remark (at a meeting of the Improvement Commissioners in 1844) that "the town was increasing at a very rapid rate, tall chimneys and loom-sheds were rising as if by magic" (emphasis added). After the mid 1840 s most weavers in Preston worked at power-looms.

It is the very late transition to power-loom weaving - in the early to mid 1840 s - which matters most to the historian of early 19th century housing in Preston, because up to then most weavers worked at hand-looms in their own homes. Until the catastrophic drop in prices for handloom weaving during the 1820 s, weavers were relatively well-off and independent. In Rogerson's Preston Directory of 1818, for example, more than 200 weavers were named individually, which suggests that at that date they were still regarded as tradesmen in their own

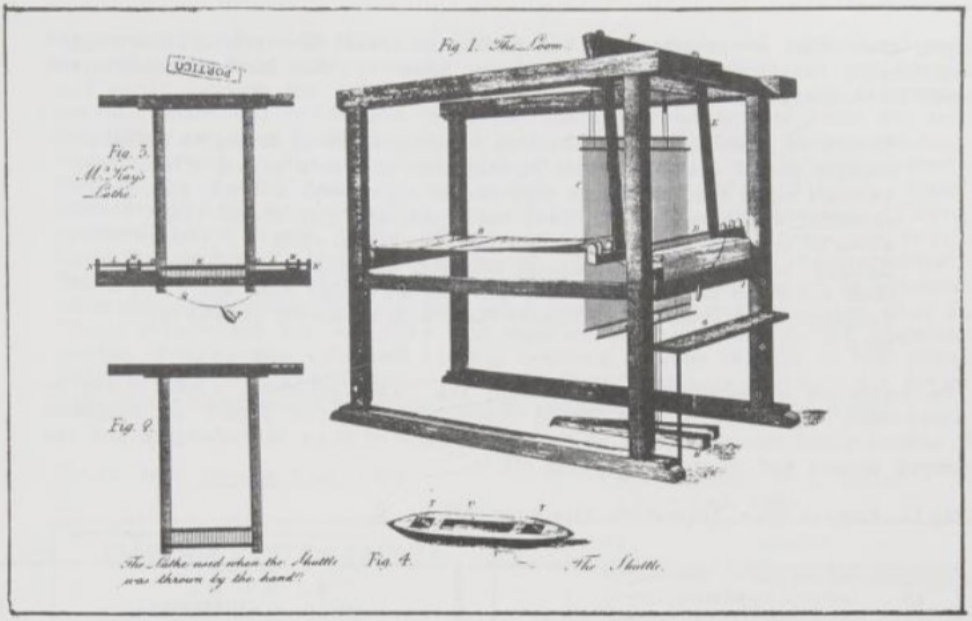
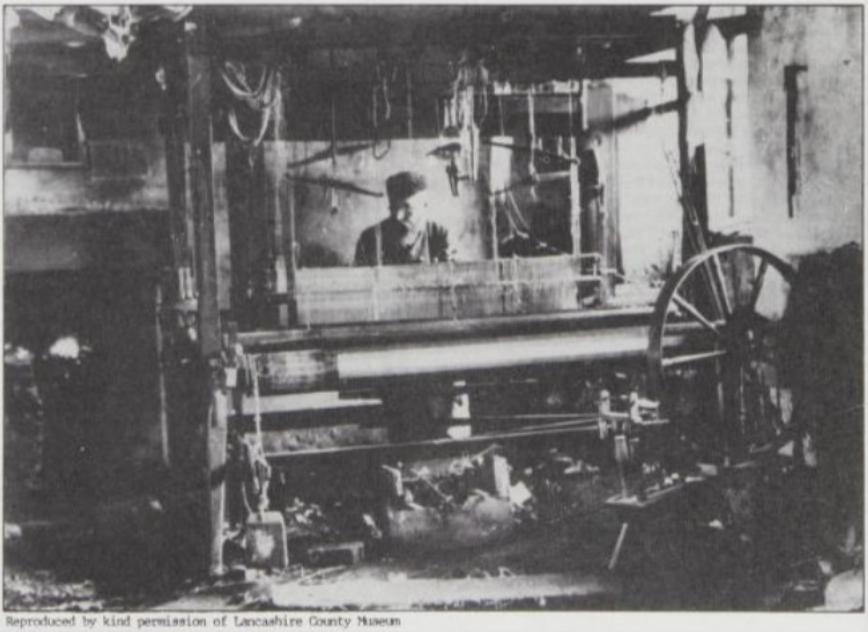


Fig.10 The handloom in theory . . . [R.A.Guest Compendious History... 1823]

Fig.11: . . . and in practice [Lancashire County Museum]



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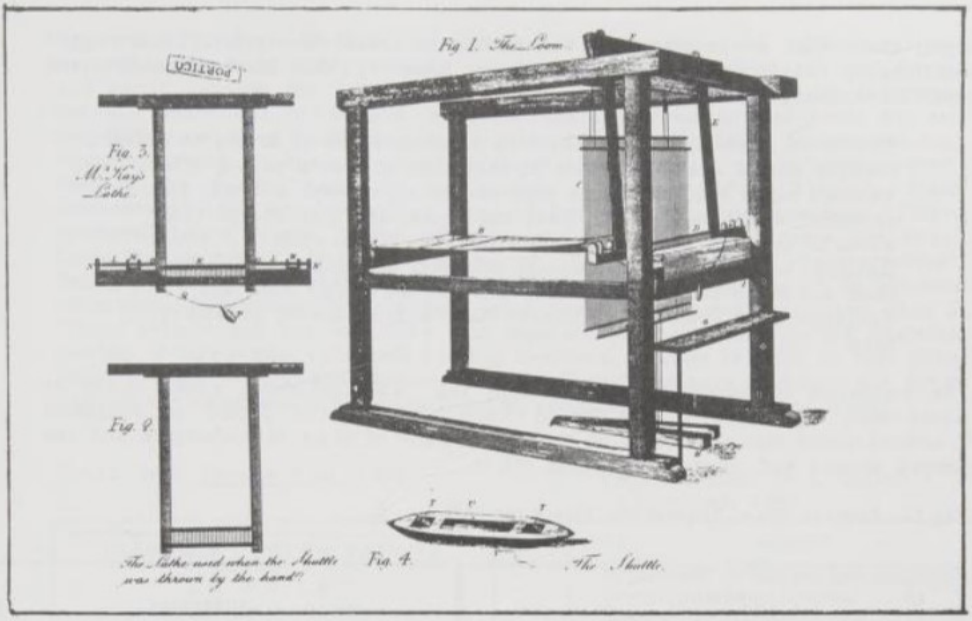

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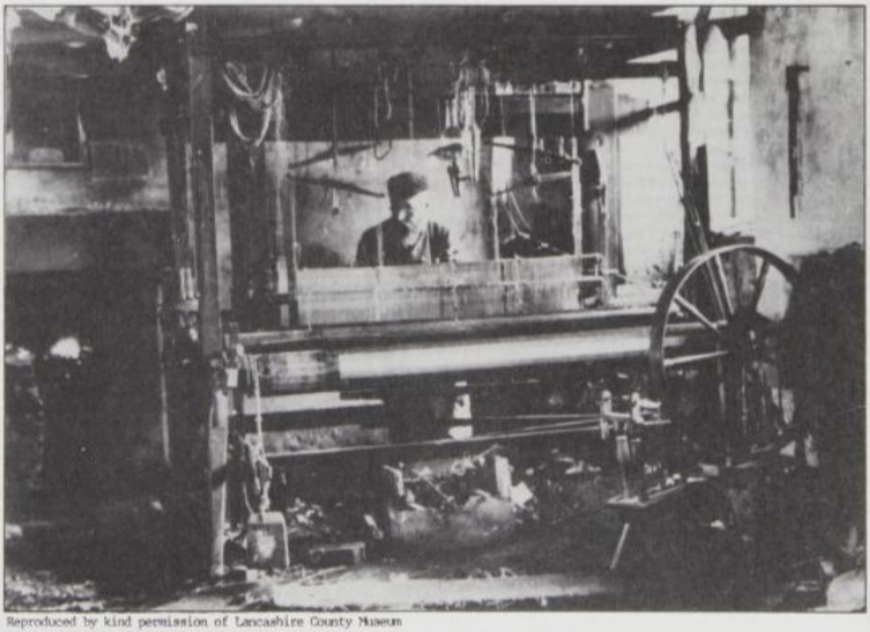

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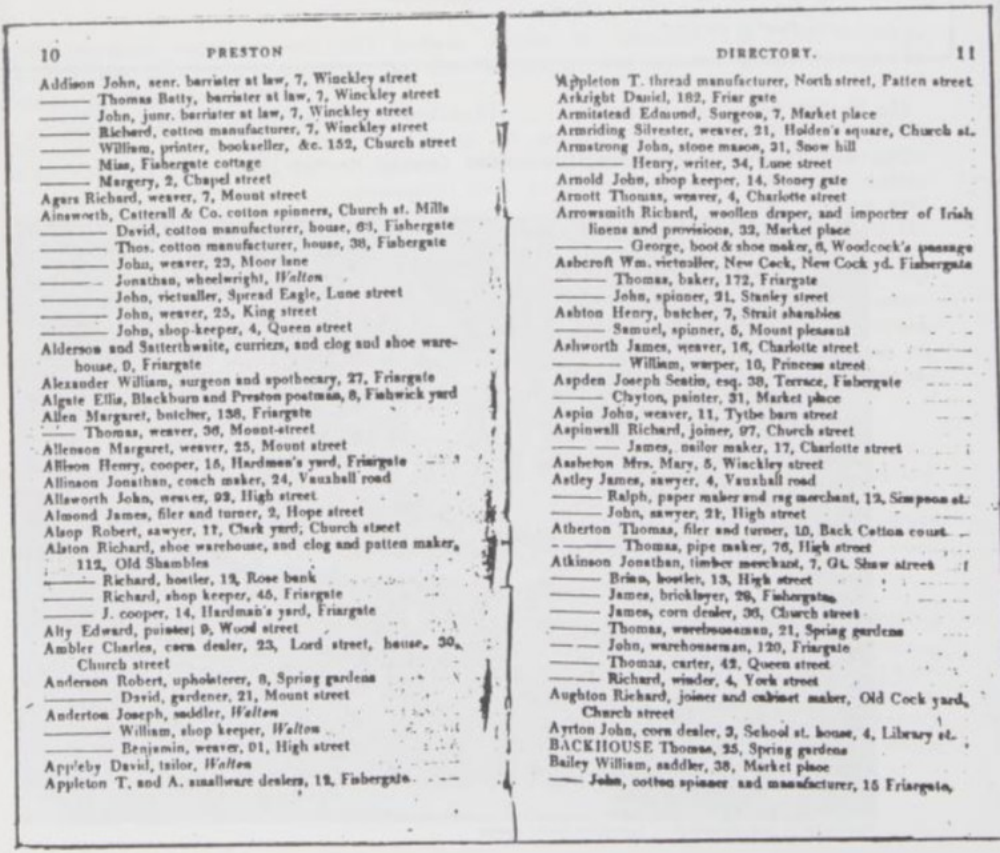
right; they were never afterwards mentioned in trade directories. Their rugged individuality was recalled half a century later by the local journalist and historian Anthony Hewitson:-

> "Handloom weaving is now about as hopeless a job as trying to extract sunlight out of cucumbers; but at that time it was a paying affair. Weavers could then afford to play two or three days a week, earn excellent wages, afterwards wear top boots, and then thrash their wives in comfort without the interference of policemen . . . Cock-fighting, badger-baiting, poaching, drinking, and dog-worrying formed their sovereign delights; and they were so amazingly rude and dangerous that even tax-collectors durst not, at times, go among them." [3]

The employers of handloom weavers were the "manufacturers" whose homes or warehouses are listed in the Trade Directories of the period at addresses scattered round the old centre of the town, many of them in Fishergate and the narrow streets and courtyards leading off it.

Fig.12: Extract from Rogerson's Directory, 1818



10 PRESTON

Addison John, senr. barrister at law, 7, Winckley street
——— Thomas Batty, barrister at law, 7, Winckley street
——— John, junr. barrister at law, 7, Winckley street
——— Richard, cotton manufacturer, 7, Winckley street
——— William, printer, bookseller, &c. 152, Church street
——— Miss, Fishergate cottage
——— Margery, 2, Chapel street
Agars Richard, weaver, 7, Mount street
Ainsworth, Catterall & Co. cotton spinners, Church st. Mills
——— David, cotton manufacturer, house, 63, Fishergate
——— Thos. cotton manufacturer, house, 38, Fishergate
——— John, weaver, 23, Moor lane
——— Jonathan, wheelwright, *Walton*
——— John, victualler, Spread Eagle, Lune street
——— John, weaver, 25, King street
——— John, shop-keeper, 4, Queen street
Alderson and Satterthwaite, curriers, and clog and shoe warehouse, 9, Friargate
Alexander William, surgeon and apothecary, 27, Friargate
Algate Ellis, Blackburn and Preston postman, 8, Fishwick yard
Allen Margaret, butcher, 138, Friargate
——— Thomas, weaver, 36, Mount-street
Allenson Margaret, weaver, 25, Mount street
Allison Henry, cooper, 18, Hardmen's yard, Friargate
Allinson Jonathan, coach maker, 24, Vauxhall road
Allsworth John, weaver, 92, High street
Almond James, filer and turner, 2, Hope street
Alsop Robert, sawyer, 11, Clark yard, Church street
Alston Richard, shoe warehouse, and clog and patten maker, 112, Old Shambles
——— Richard, hostler, 13, Rose bank
——— Richard, shop keeper, 45, Friargate
——— J. cooper, 14, Hardman's yard, Friargate
Alty Edward, painter, 9, Wood street
Ambler Charles, corn dealer, 23, Lord street, house, 30, Church street
Anderson Robert, upholsterer, 8, Spring gardens
——— David, gardener, 21, Mount street
Anderton Joseph, saddler, *Walton*
——— William, shop keeper, *Walton*
——— Benjamin, weaver, 91, High street
Appleby David, tailor, *Walton*
Appleton T. and A. smallware dealers, 12, Fishergate

DIRECTORY. 11

Appleton T. thread manufacturer, North street, Patten street
Arkright Daniel, 182, Friar gate
Armistead Edmund, Surgeon, 7, Market place
Armriding Silvester, weaver, 21, Holden's square, Church st.
Armstrong John, stone mason, 31, Snow hill
——— Henry, writer, 34, Lune street
Arnold John, shop keeper, 14, Stoney gate
Arnott Thomas, weaver, 4, Charlotte street
Arrowsmith Richard, woollen draper, and importer of Irish linens and provisions, 32, Market place
——— George, boot & shoe maker, 6, Woodcock's passage
Ashcroft Wm. victualler, New Cock, New Cock yd. Fishergate
——— Thomas, baker, 172, Friargate
——— John, spinner, 21, Stanley street
Ashton Henry, butcher, 7, Strait shambles
——— Samuel, spinner, 5, Mount pleasant
Ashworth James, weaver, 18, Charlotte street
——— William, warper, 10, Princess street
Aspden Joseph Seatin, esq. 38, Terrace, Fishergate
——— Chyton, painter, 31, Market place
Aspin John, weaver, 11, Tythe barn street
Aspinwall Richard, joiner, 97, Church street
——— ——— James, tailor maker, 17, Charlotte street
Assheton Mrs. Mary, 5, Winckley street
Astley James, sawyer, 4, Vauxhall road
——— Ralph, paper maker and rag merchant, 13, Simpson st.
——— John, sawyer, 21, High street
Atherton Thomas, filer and turner, 10, Back Cotton court
——— Thomas, pipe maker, 76, High street
Atkinson Jonathan, timber merchant, 7, Gt. Shaw street
——— Brian, hostler, 13, High street
——— James, bricklayer, 28, Fishergate
——— James, corn dealer, 36, Church street
——— Thomas, warehouseman, 21, Spring gardens
——— John, warehouseman, 120, Friargate
——— Thomas, carter, 42, Queen street
——— Richard, winder, 4, York street
Aughton Richard, joiner and cabinet maker, Old Cock yard, Church street
Ayrton John, corn dealer, 3, School st. house, 4, Library st.
BACKHOUSE Thomas, 25, Spring gardens
Bailey William, saddler, 38, Market place
——— John, cotton spinner and manufacturer, 15 Friargate,

The exact numbers of these weavers and manufacturers are difficult, if not impossible, to find; partly because the trade suffered shocking ups and downs, and partly because the written sources are usually vague about the distinction between hand- and power-loom weavers. (Not that their authors could not tell the difference: they could, but in the early years it was taken for granted that "weaver" meant handloom weaver, and later that it meant power-loom weaver.) Perhaps the turning point in this respect was about 1840. Whittle's Trade Directory of 1841 lists the cotton firms of Preston under three headings: "Cotton Spinners" (eight names, taking mills for granted); "Cotton Spinners and Power Loom Manufacturers" (fifteen names); and "Cotton and Muslin Manufacturers", listing 23 names and addresses, with "hand loom" or "power loom" in brackets after each. Only three of these were using power looms, seventeen were given as "(hand loom)", and one was using both systems. Eighteen would be the minimum number of firms who were still keeping handloom weavers in work at that date, because some of the manufacturers in the second category certainly did so as well, either continuously or intermittently, according to the state of trade.

Fig.13: from Preston Pilot, 1825

ELIGIBLE PORTER VAULTS.

TO BE LET,

And entered upon the 1st of May next,

ALL those eligible PORTER and LIQUOR VAULTS, situated in Bolton's Court, Preston, late in the occupation of Messrs. R. Johnson and Son, and now of Mr. R. Threlfall, Jun.

For particulars apply to Mr. T. BARTON, Walton, the Owner, or L. CLARKE, Bookseller, Preston.

March 20, 1825.

TO BE LET,

For a Term of Years, with immediate possession,

THE WAREHOUSE of the late Mr. TIMOTHY FRANCE, Cotton Manufacturer, situate on the East Side of Mount Street, Preston.

N. B.—The Tenant may be accommodated, at a reasonable price, with the eligible STOCK, late belonging to the deceased, consisting of Yarn, Healds, Reeds, Warping Mills, a Winding Machine (nearly new), Counters, Desks, Weights, Scales, a Press, and other articles suitable for a Cotton Manufacturer's Business.

Apply to Mr. DANIEL ARKWRIGHT, Grocer, Preston; Mr. GEO. FISHWICK, Scorton; or at the Office of HOWARDS and HARRISON, Attorneys, Winckley Square, Preston.

TO BE LET BY TICKET,

FOR A TERM OF YEARS,

At the House of Mr. Wm. Hind, the Sign of the Plough Inn, situate in Friargate, Preston, on Monday the 11th day of April next, at seven o'clock in the Evening, subject to such conditions as will be then and there produced;

ALL that old-accustomed and well-established INN or PUBLIC-HOUSE, called the Plough Inn, situate in Friargate aforesaid

And also all those FIVE MESSUAGES or DWELLING-HOUSES, and a SHOP, situate behind the above-mentioned Public-House.

For further particulars, apply to Mr. WM. HIND, the owner; or Messrs. J. and J. BRAY, Solicitors, Preston.

Preston, 31st March, 1825.

Fig.14: Extract from Whittle's Directory, 1841

44 PRESTON

COTTON SPINNERS AND POWER LOOM CLOTH MANUFACTURERS.

Catterall Paul and Sons, North-road
Clayton Thomas and Son, Pitt street
Dawson Hugh and William, Canal bank, Fylde-road
Gardner Atkinson and Co., Marsh-lane
Hawkins John, Ox-heys, Green bank
Horrocks, Miller and Co. Yard cotton mills, Church street
Horrocks, Jackson and Co. Turks head court
Livesey, Leigh and Co. Grimshaw street
Paley John, and Co. Heatley street
Ryley Richard, Fishwick
Rodgett Miles, and Sons, Bow-lane
Sleddon Francis, & Son, Hanover street, North-road
Swainson, Birleys and Co. Fishwick
Taylor, William, Watery-lane-ends
Threlfall Richard, Sleddon street, North-road

COTTON AND MUSLIN MANUFACTURERS.

Andrews George, 134, Friargate (hand loom)
Barton and Rickerby, Library street (hand loom)
Behren S. L., Leeming street (power loom)
Carr James, Library street (hand loom)
Clayton R. and Co., Avenham street (hand loom)
Dawson William, Aqueduct street (power loom)
Edge and Co., Arthur street (power loom)
Faulkner and Co., Avenham street (hand loom)
Gillow Joseph, Chapel walks (hand loom)
Haslam Joseph, Mount street (hand loom)
Hogg James, Leeming street (hand loom)
Lancaster William, Shepherd street (hand loom)
Leece and Hartley, Bolton's court (hand loom)
Napier and Goodeat, St. John's place (hand loom)
Nathan N. P. and H., Cannon street (hand loom)
Park James, Lawson street (hand loom and muslin)
Parkinson and Worden, Newton street (power & hand)
Patchett and Barton, Bolton's court (hand loom)
Pollard Thomas, Avenham street (hand loom)
Turner J. A. and Co., Derby street (hand loom)
Tweedale Joseph, Gorst's court, Fishergate (hand l.)
Wilding George and Sons, Lord's walk (hand loom)
Wilson Robert, Charles street

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Establishing the numbers of handloom weavers themselves is even harder, but it is obviously necessary for an understanding of early industrial housing in the town. A pollbook for the election of December 1830 (when Preston, exceptionally among industrial towns, enjoyed universal manhood suffrage) identifies 1,470 weavers - though some of these may have been corruptly invented or raised from their graves for political purposes. At a public meeting on distress among weavers caused by the Spinners' Strike of 1837, one speaker said that there were then 1,050 looms idle in the town (implying that there were others which were not idle). And between these dates the Report of the Select Committee on Handloom Weavers' Petitions (1834) recorded the evidence of one witness that there were 3,000 weavers in the town and 10,000 in the surrounding country districts. Reports in contemporary newspapers give contradictory impressions. For example, the Preston Chronicle reported in April 1835 that:-

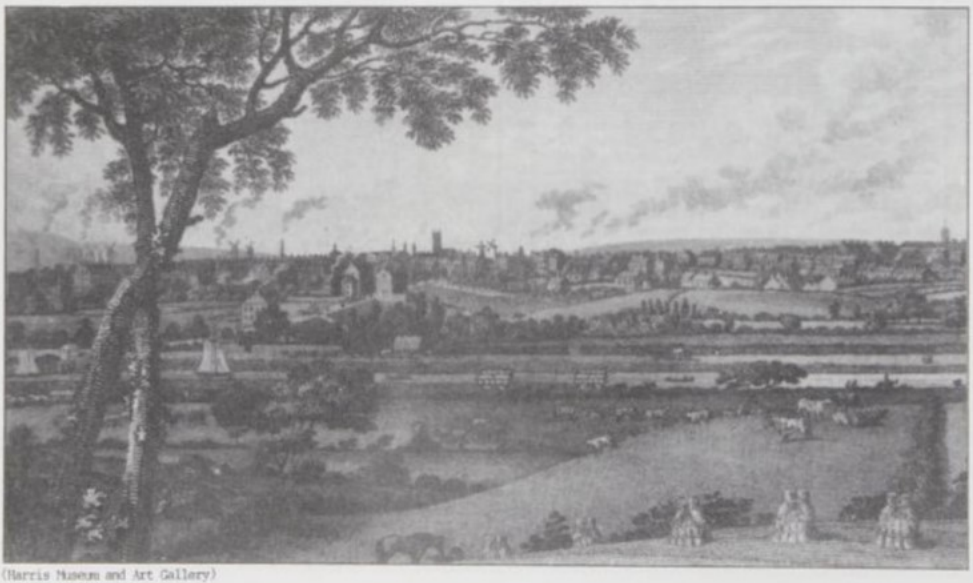
> "since the introduction and advancing application of power looms, hand loom weaving is lost for ever . . . Many of our Preston masters are giving up further business in their country warehouses, and are also lessening their establishments at home";

but in July 1836:-

> "The demand for hand loom weavers generally was scarcely ever so brisk as at the present moment . . . The fact is, manufacturers are hawking their work, which is chiefly of the common description, to be woven from house to house, and offering higher wages."

Our interest is those houses, in which the domestic weaving industry was carried on; and from the evidence above (all of which, it should be noted, dates from the period of decline) it would appear that there were anything between one and three thousand of them in Preston. (Chapter III pursues this question in detail.)

Fig.15: Preston from Penwortham Hill c.1820



(Harris Museum and Art Gallery)

(Harris Museum and Art Gallery)

Fig.16: Preston from the south, about 1830 [J.Harwood]

The impact of the cotton industry on the town which had been "suited to the genteel style of the inhabitants" in 1795 may be judged from a change of tone in the descriptions given in successive Trade Directories. In 1815:-

> "Preston contains many well built houses, and, together with the neighbouring townships, is the residence of many opulent families. Perhaps a more agreeable town residence could not be found in the county." [4]

By 1828 the tone was frankly nostalgic:-

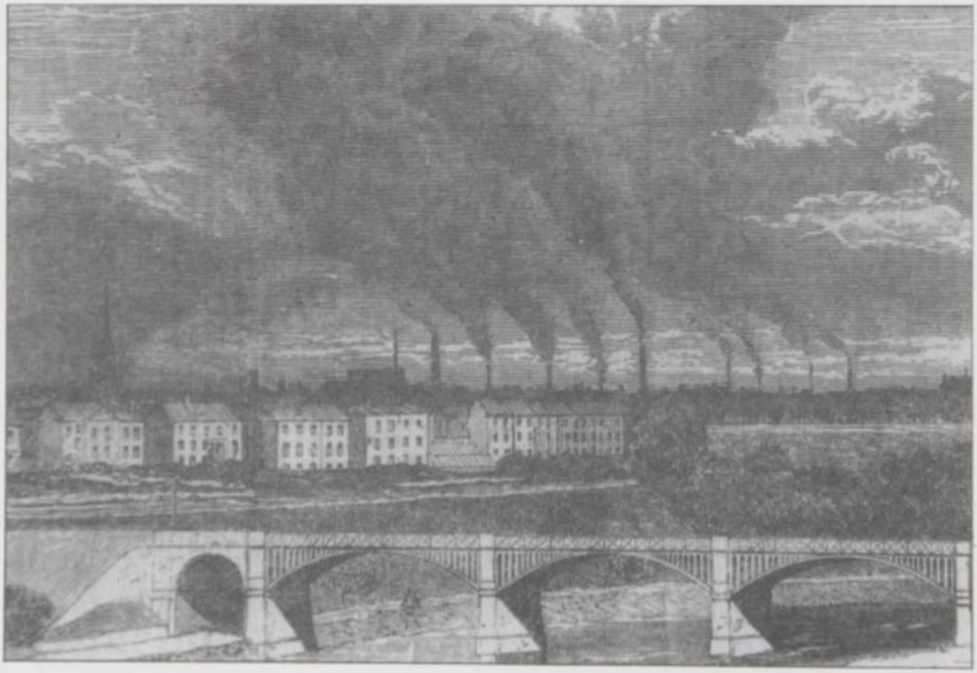
> "Half a century ago Preston could not be noted as a manufacturing town, and . . . was more remarkable for the residence of independent persons and its claims to gentility, than for the production of articles deemed so essentially necessary to adorn the rich and clothe all ranks. The rapid strides of science and art, rendered subservient to machinery and manufactures in general, have, of late years, overtaken and included Preston amongst the manufacturing towns of Lancashire." [5]

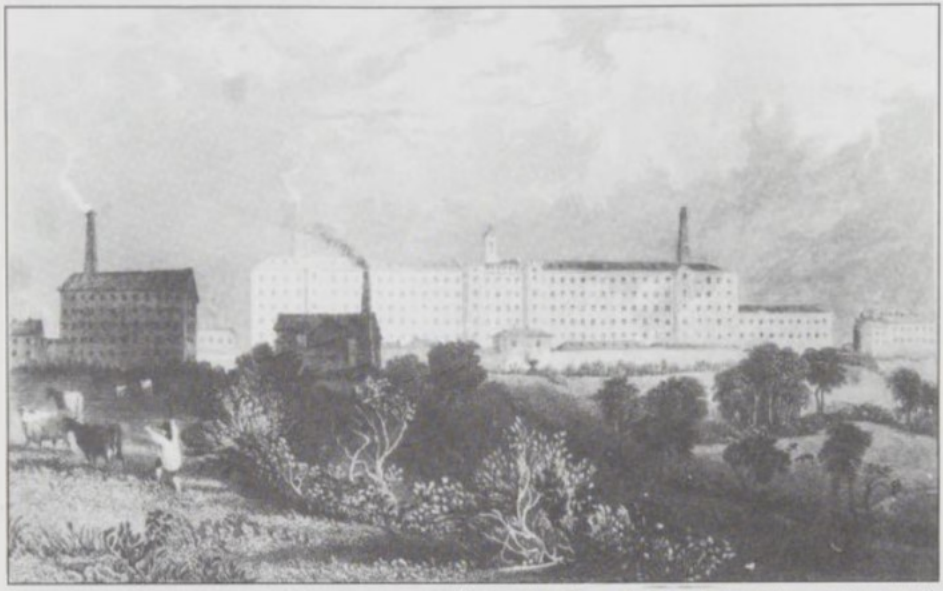
In 1847 there were 46 cotton mills employing 13,851 "hands", which was almost a quarter of the whole population. Over half these "hands" were women and children, and most of them worked in big mills. Compared with other cotton towns in Lancashire, Preston's mills were exceptionally big business. The average workforce in 1847 was over 300; nine firms employed more than 500, while Horrocks Miller & Co with 2,000, and Swainson & Birley with 1,400, were giants by any standards. Horrocks's business records show that they were marketing Preston products in South America, the East Indies, and above all, Bombay and Calcutta; and reciprocally importing enormous quantities of indigo, spices, and tea.

At the heart of this exotically extended web of trade lay Preston, one of the models chosen by Charles Dickens in 1854 for his tale Hard Times:-

> "You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful . . . It was a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it . . . It was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves for ever and ever, and never got uncoiled . . . Seen from a distance . . . Coketown lay shrouded in a haze of its own, which appeared impervious to the sun's rays. You only knew the town was there, because you knew there could have been no such sulky blot upon the prospect without a town."

Fig.17: Preston from Penwortham [Illustrated London News, 6 Sept. 1862]





(Reproduced by kind permission of the Harris Museum and Art Gallery)

Fig.18: Swainson and Birley's Fishwick Mill, known as "The Big Factory"; it was erected in 1823, at the south-east corner of the town, on the brow overlooking the Ribble Valley.

In that book Dickens was interested in what was "modern" about Coketown, rather than what was old-fashioned or simply taken for granted. The dozen or so "manufacturers" who had no steam engines, and no mills either, but who gave employment to handloom weavers (even at that date), were not relevant to his theme. Nor was the fact that, although a millowner might catch a steam train to Manchester or London, if his mill caught fire the fire-engine would have to be dragged to the scene by horses, or even by the firemen themselves, and the water pumped by muscle-power alone. Nor did he tell his readers that there were other smells than smoke and hot engine oil. He described the "several large streets all very like one another, and many small streets still more like one another", but he didn't mention the old streets and their teeming courtyards; nor the condition in which he must have experienced them through all five of his senses - since most had neither drains nor sewers at the time. This was left for other visitors to report.

One of these was a reporter for the architectural weekly The Builder. On the 7th and the 14th of December 1861, a series under the title "Condition of Our Towns" brought Preston to public attention. The writer walked all through the

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Fig.19: Cottages on the west side of Tithebarn Street c.1910. [The photograph has suffered, but in the original it is possible to see that the white ones are thatched. The brick bands at the left and right-hand ends of the row suggest a date of about 1700.]

town noting what he saw. A few extracts will give the flavour of the whole. In Fishergate:-

> "By the side of the Lancaster Bank is a very narrow street of very low houses, occupied by surveyors, land agents, valuers, a beadle, a sheriff's officer, a beer shop, and a tailor; down which flakes of soot are flying and settling on the cracked, bad pavement, in which channels are made in communication with external wooden spouting to the houses. Beyond this, among the smart shops of Fishergate, stands a thatched house, with bulged plaster walls - the last vestige of old Preston in this bustling stream of modern traffic."

The market place "is a handsome roomy parallelogram, surrounded on two sides by good shops, inns, and hotel; by the Town-hall on the third; and by a row of shops on the fourth side, which is broken up by alleys leading to the Shambles in the rear of them . . . The gutters in the market-place run with slops thrown out of houses in the courts around; channels across the pavement in Clayton-court - channels from urinals in a passage to the Blue Anchor - channels in passage to Strait Shambles, - all furnish tributaries to the stream . . . Wilcockson's-court does the same: Ginbow entry, leading to the Wheatsheaf and White Hart, brings down the swimmings from exposed urinals and stable muck . . . "

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Fig.20: Preston Market Place c.1860

Things looked up a bit in what is now Lancaster Road, but not for long:-

> "The post office [is] in a block of newly-erected lofty houses . . . Attached to the Stanley Arms, in the same block, is a notice-board, inscribed 'Police regulations. Make no wet.' And yet at the end of the hotel there is an unprotected urinal; and, unprovided for by drainage, the urine flows across the pavement in a broad stream."

The writer's journeys outwards reinforced these impressions: in the ancient streets, such as Friargate, which was lined with similar courtyards; in one of the early "terraced" streets just behind Friargate, High Street (now the site of Ringway), where a huge uncompleted sewer discharged its contents down the centre of the street; and in the newly built suburbs to the north and east. In the Plungington area to the north:-

> "New mills are built without roads. The Queen's Mill, newly built (1861) on this moor, has neither roads nor drains; and the rain and waste steam have formed lakes around it of coal-ash mud, which the operatives must ford to enter the mill. A landowner here provided his houses with drainage and water closets; but, unfortunately, the want of playground obliges the children to play where they may, and the closets soon got out of order; and this pioneer movement was abandoned, and the reign of the cesspool resumed."

And along New Hall Lane to the east of the town:-

> "More mills, and more mud; a row of houses, with a man weaving in a cellar of one of them; a great stagnant swamp, with a brick-yard in it, and a square dung-heap; an isolated row of houses in Skeffington road, with pools of drainage spread before them; more mills, more mud, more dwellings propped up while building . . . "

The most apt local comment on this collision between the old world and the new was: "Preston is a hundred years in arrear of the steady and somewhat surprising progress of its own manufactures". Written in 1844, this would still have been fair comment thirty years later.

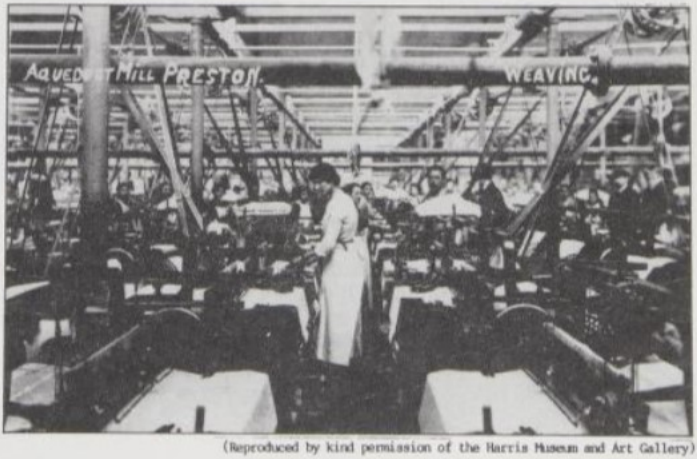
Fig.21: Extract from Preston Guardian 30 Nov. 1844

"PRESTON.—Of all the rising manufacturing towns in the north, Preston is probably the only one which has contrived to add to its population, its wealth, its factories, to a very considerable extent, without at the same time having made any corresponding advances in civilization, cleanliness, and the ameliorations in the material part of the city. Its streets are as narrow and as crooked and as dirty as ever. Very few of its shops, even in Fishergate, the Regent-street of the place, exhibit any appearance of improvement from what they must have been thirty years ago. It possesses no public building, not even a market; and on every Saturday evening the butchers' shambles, and other sheds for the display of every marketable commodity, are set up in a line on one side of the very street just named, nearly to its whole length, causing filth, confusion, and inconvenience. It will hardly be believed that there exists no such thing as a public or any other bath, hot or cold, in Preston. There are two ordinary news-rooms in the place—the one a little more aristocratic than the other; yet even the latter is very unworthy of the wealthy people who subscribe to it. Preston, I repeat it, is fifty years in arrear of the progress of all modern manufacturing towns in England, in the conveniences, the comforts, and the embellishments of life; nay, it is a hundred years in arrear of the steady and somewhat surprising progress of its own manufactures. It is a place slow in improving, and seems to consist only of people intent on amassing wealth by commerce, manufacture, and speculation. It would take half a century of steady good-will and a considerable expenditure of money, to make Preston what Manchester, Halifax, Bradford, Wakefield, or even Huddersfield, are, and have been for a long time. And yet, to judge from a little episode in the daily routine of the place, to which I was a witness in the green market, one would feel disposed to consider the Prestonians an intellectual people. A licensed hawker having advertised the importation and intended sale of three thousand of cheap books, had been so successful in his operation, which was carried on in the open market-place, that he felt it necessary to apologise to "the reading public" because his large stock had been exhausted a day sooner than he had anticipated. He promised, at the same time, the literati of Preston, to return soon with a still more splendid supply for their accommodation."—*Dr. Granville's Spas of England.*

Another visitor to Preston in 1862 had been Mr H.B.Farnall, sent by the Board of Trade to report on the consequences of the Cotton Famine (caused by the American Civil War). He reported that there were 71 mills in the town and that the number of persons usually employed in them was 25,000. This was probably something of a "guesstimation", based on what the employers told him, because such a figure would have amounted to 31% of the whole population. On the other hand, it is not so very different from the picture twenty years later, when the census recorded a total population of 93,720, of whom 25,909, or 27%, were employed in the textile industry; and in 1883 the local historian Anthony Hewitson listed 73 mills employing some 28,000 hands, or 30% of the population. That seems to have been the peak of cotton's dominance in Preston (though the peak of its prosperity had already passed). By 1901 the numbers had begun to slip both absolutely and relatively: there were 23,788 employed in cotton, which was then a mere 21% of the population.

During this later period of continued rise and then slow decline of the industry there were a number of significant changes in its nature. First, the size of the mills grew from an average of 300 hands in the middle of the century to about 350 in the 1860 s, and almost 400 by 1880. Second, the number of firms engaged in the spinning branch alone, which had begun the Industrial Revolution in Preston, did not increase very much (9 in 1851, 13 in 1883); those who concentrated entirely on weaving outnumbered them by about two to one; and those who combined both processes were not only more numerous than either but also generally larger. Preston was neither the weaving centre of the world (like Burnley) nor the spinning centre (as Oldham became); but, as far as the workers were concerned, it was becoming progressively more interested in weaving. In 1862 Mr Farnall reported that there were 6,004 weavers and 1,615 spinners. Power-loom weaving was mainly women's work, and that is the third change of great significance to the social historian: although in 1851 only just over half of the cotton workers were women, by 1881 two-thirds of them were women; and by 1901, three-quarters, one in three of whom was married.

Fig.22: Women weavers in Aqueduct Street Mill, c.1910



(Reproduced by kind permission of the Harris Museum and Art Gallery)

These are only statistics. What they meant to all those families who were woken by the "knocker-up", at 5.30 in the morning, six days a week, is another matter. Work in the cotton mills was probably never a pleasure (except when compared with no work at all), but a few people whose working lives extended from almost the beginning to almost the end of the century noticed changes in the social atmosphere of the industry, not necessarily for the better.

Thomas Banks, Secretary of the Spinners Union, writing a "Short Sketch of the Cotton Trade in Preston" in 1888, began it thus:-

> "Taking a retrospective view of the life of a cotton factory lad of 1821; short of seven years of age; starting work before six o'clock in the morning; trotting on through the long day till nearly eight o'clock at night, and at the same time on Saturday nights, with little time allowed for meals. A rope hung up in every wheel house [i.e. where the wheeled mules were], for what purpose we will leave you to judge . . . All this time and labour for 2s.1d. a week."

But he ended it on a different note, implying dissatisfaction with the present rather than the past:-

> "We have lived long enough to witness the rise and progress of cotton spinning in Preston and its decline, and can well remember that more than sixty years ago the names of the early pioneers in cotton spinning and weaving were like household words. The early pioneers took a special interest in the welfare and prosperity of the town, and resided amongst the people, and spent their money amongst the tradespeople of the borough. Their names were Arkwright, Calvert, Goodair, Hawkins, Birley, Simpson, Smith, Adam Leigh, Watson, Horrocks, Miller, Catterall, Ainsworth, Paley, Gardner, Clayton, Swainson and Birley, and others . . ."

This prompted him to remember the "rearing" of Swainson and Birley's "Big Factory" about 1823, which was celebrated with a party in the new mill, "with spiced ale and currant bread, and there was some fine scampering among those large long rooms like a lot of young hares".

In 1903 a local newspaper printed the recollections of an 81-year-old cotton worker, Mr Holmes, who remembered exactly the same hours of work for the same wages as Thomas Banks, and that he often came home black and blue from the shoulders down to the thighs from the strappings that he received: "The old hand-wheel spinners were regular slave drivers". On the other hand:-

> "They were times of great excitement. Nay, there seemed more life and fire then in everything. I have seen the pavors [cobblestones] all pulled up for the full length of Church Street during the election riots [of 1837]; I have seen the windows of the Bull Hotel smashed to atoms, and the front rooms would be almost full of paving stones . . . My stars and garters, they had a do with their bludgeons, sticks, and any sort of implements as would make a mark."

The lives of such people had spanned both phases of the Industrial Revolution in Preston's cotton industry: that when the handloom weaver and his vigorous and insanitary culture prevailed, and that when the power-loom and the sewer gradually replaced it with the economic power of the female and the culture of hygiene. In terms of the history of industrial housing these phases are approximately equivalent to the difference between the weavers' peculiar cottages, all of which have been lost, and the regimented terraces of orthodox two-up-and-two-downs, which are only now being swept away. This booklet is devoted to the study of the first of these phases.

Fig.23: By 1842 the handloom weavers of Preston were feeling the pressure . . .
[Illustration of report on "Plug Plot" riot of 13 August 1842]


THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS.

Chapter II

INWARD EXPANSION

The sources of information

All the cottages which are the subject of this and the following chapter have been demolished, leaving little or no trace. Compared with the second half of the century (which, as a consequence of the 1848 Public Health Act, has a complete series of statutorily deposited building plans beginning in 1850), there is not much documentary evidence either. At first I was stumped by this problem, but subsequent efforts have proved that relevant meaning can be wrung from the remaining sources with the aid of a little inspiration and a lot of luck.

The most useful and comprehensive are obviously maps of various kinds. The Ordnance Survey covered Preston on scales of 6 inches to the mile in 1845, 60 inches in 1847, and 126 inches in 1892. The sheets of the 60-inch map are indispensably useful for detailed study of buildings. Earlier periods are covered by local maps of various kinds, fortunately at useful intervals. First is William Shakeshaft's map of 1809, on a scale of 6 inches to 500 yards, which he very helpfully revised and brought up to date in another edition in 1822; they lack the detail of the Ordnance Survey (showing blocks of building undivided by boundary lines), but they do identify which buildings had been built by these dates, and which had not; and the details can be filled in from other sources. The small but finely-detailed town plan published by Edward Baines in 1825 as a supplement to his Directory of Lancashire is surprisingly useful, considering its scale. Then there is the large-scale map executed by the Preston surveyor J.J.Myres in 1836, followed by the Tithe Plan of 1840, which must have been based on the same survey. Finally, there is a set of Sewer Record plans on a scale of one inch to 44 feet, which appear to be the product of the survey of the town carried out in the early 1850's by the Local Board's first surveyor, Henry Wrigg. The particular value of the information contained on this set of plans will appear in Chapter III.

Equally indispensable are certain official written records, principally the census enumerators's returns and the Land Tax books, some of which cover the whole town, house by house. (The same should apply to the Rate Books for the period, if they survive, but in Preston they have not come to light, and are said to have perished in the Town Hall fire of 1947.) Unfortunately, the decennial censuses did not become detailed enough for our purposes until 1841; and the Land Tax books, which end in 1832 anyway, are usefully detailed in Preston only at the end of the series.

The other official records which are almost as comprehensive in Preston are pollbooks of Parliamentary elections, and the annual Registers of Electors. The Borough of Preston enjoyed universal male suffrage from 1768 to 1832, so the pollbooks are lists of virtually all male inhabitants, with their occupations and addresses. Although the local effect of the 1832 Reform Act was to cause a reduction of the electorate, the later pollbooks, and the Registers of Electors which the Act caused to be compiled, are still very full lists: comprehensive for the middle classes, and a good representative fraction of the working classes - at least in this period.

These sources are essentially comprehensive, and readily available for public inspection at the County Record Office or Library (in Preston, the Harris Library). Neither of these benefits applies to documents of most fundamental interest to historians of housing, title deeds to property. Deeds are naturally the private property of the owners of houses in any case, so that historians have no right to see them except by permission of the owners. On the other hand, large quantities of deeds to houses which were acquired by the Local Authority (usually by compulsory purchase), and subsequently demolished, have been deposited in the Record Office, where they can be examined. Unfortunately, legal changes and reforms in the 1920 s and later, designed to speed up the process of conveyancing, have reduced many deeds to summaries of the most recent changes of ownership; and in many cases the deeds of individual buildings belonging to estates which were later split up date only from that time - usually the late 19th or early 20th centuries. When you ask to see the deeds of any particular property you never know whether you will be shown a small file of boring typescript, or a fat bundle of parchments covered with legal jargon containing a few gems of useful information.

All of the written sources mentioned so far are what is lightly described as "time-consuming" to use, and deeds by far the most unpredictable. With the exception of deeds, which I have had time to use only by brief sampling (and that on the "lucky-dip" principle), these documents and the maps already mentioned are the basic sources of information for this booklet. Local newspapers are perenially useful for almost any aspect of local history in the 19th century, and their advertisement pages especially so for this subject; they need to be read systematicly for particular purposes, of course; but they should also be scanned randomly, because they are full of diverting and unexpected nuggets of information, many of which will come in useful some time, while a few are pearls without price to the researcher. (Browsing in local newspapers is one of the best research practices, not least because it relieves the tedium of using some of the other sources.)

Other written records, pictures and photographs, even of buildings miles away from Preston, have made crucial contributions to the research, and they are mentioned where they appply.

Overall growth between 1800 and 1850

The sequence of maps overleaf [Figs.24, 25, and 26] shows the changes in the built-up area of Preston during the first half of the 19th century. Between about 1800 and 1850 the area increased about three-fold; but the population multiplied more than five times over: 12,000 in 1801 had become 68,000 by 1851. It is obvious that in addition to a significant amount of new building round the fringes of the old town there must have been a good deal of "inward expansion" as well - filling up of gardens, yards, and other open spaces in the ancient core of the town.

Fig.24: Preston c.1790 [extract from Hewitson's map]

Fig.25: Preston in 1831 [extract from Boundary Commissioners' Report]

(reproduced with permission of Lancashire County Library, Preston District)

Fig.26: Preston in 1845 [reduction of 6-inch Ordnance Survey]

The published Census Reports enable us to investigate the ratio of people to "houses" at ten-year intervals. This not only gives average levels of density of occupation, but also reveals some significant irregularities in the pattern of growth. As Table 1 shows, the increases of population and houses were out of step: there was an initial surge of building which overtook the growth of the

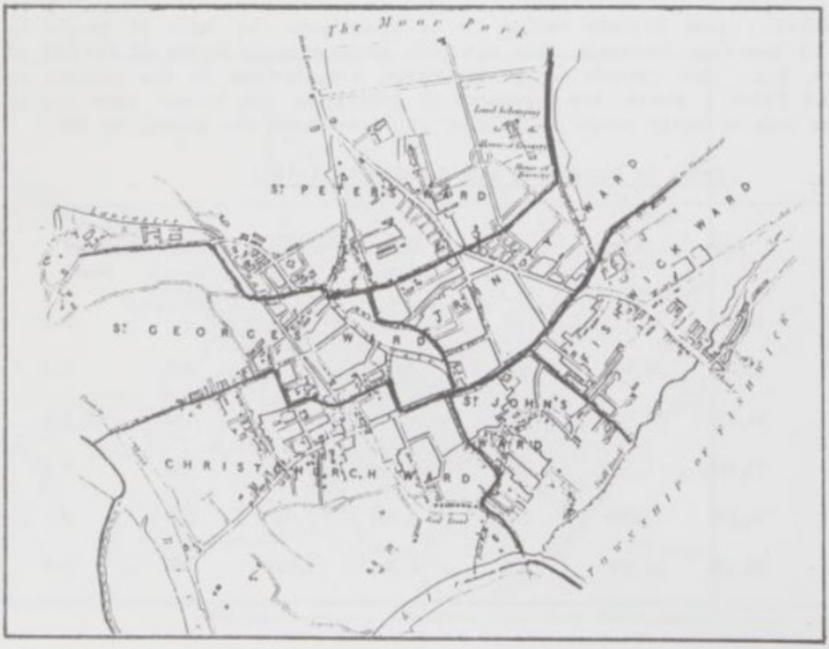
Table 1: Population and Housing 1801-1851

Census year	Popn.	Addn.	% inc	No of houses	Addn.	% inc	Persons/ house
1801	11,887	-	-	2,231	-	-	5.3
1811	17,065	5,178	43%	3,612	1,381	62%	4.7
1821	24,575	7,510	44%	4,176	564	16%	5.9
1831	33,112	8,537	35%	6,522	2,346	56%	5.1
1841	50,131	17,019	51%	9,994	3,472	53%	5.0
1851	68,537	18,406	37%	11,543	1,549	15%	5.9

population between 1801 and 1811; and then even more striking slumps in building in the second decade and the last. There must have been good reasons why the stock of houses grew by 62% in the first ten years of the century, but by only about 15% in the 1840 s. I believe that both were connected with concurrent changes in the cotton industry: a large proportion of the houses built in the first decade were not only dwellings but also workshops for weaving; and in the 1840 s not only was there a tremendous diversion of building capital towards new mills (especially weaving sheds), but the old workshops of the handloom weavers were being taken up as dwellings. Some of the evidence for this is mentioned in Chapter III.

One of the consequences of the physical growth of the town was the beginning of the spatial segregation of different social classes. This was already very marked before the end of the 1830 s. A crude overall view is available in the Report on Municipal Corporations of 1835, which includes a table of the number of ratepayers at each level in each of the six wards into which the town was then divided [Fig.27]. The registers of voters enable us (with much time-consuming effort) to translate this into fine detail, by providing the occupations of the voters in each ward. Striking differences are apparent. Christ Church Ward, which included Winckley Square, was very top-heavy, containing more middle class "gentlemen", millowners, lawyers, and other professionals than working class spinners, weavers, mechanics and so on. St Peter's Ward to the north, and Fishwick Ward to the east, had exactly the opposite character - vast numbers of working people and virtually none of the upper crust. The other three wards, sharing boundaries where they met at the market place, were more evenly balanced around a solid core of shopkeepers and tradesmen.

Fig.27: Ward boundaries in 1836



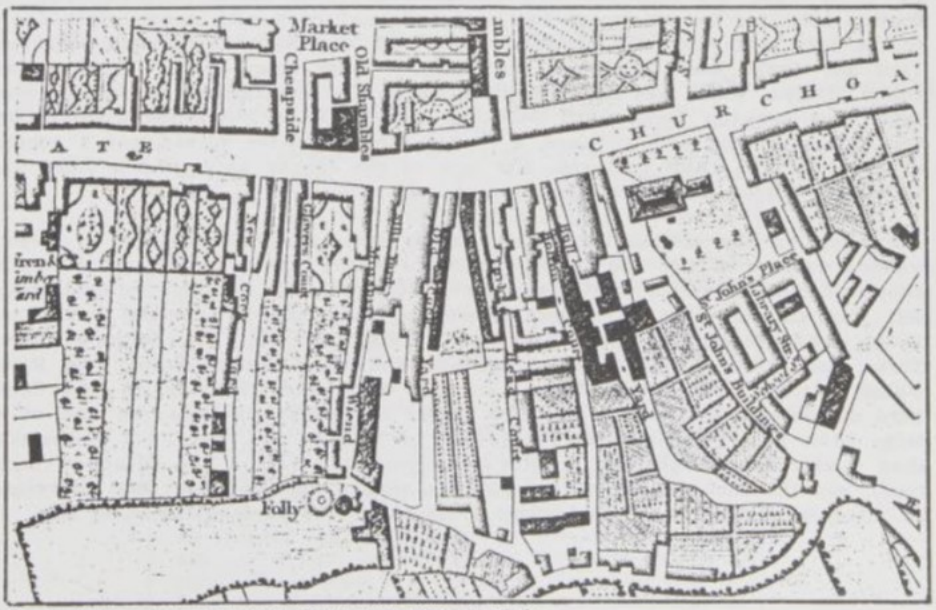
The rest of this chapter looks at the way housing was supplied by infilling the old core of the town. This appears to have been a continuation of traditional habits, exploiting the inherited pattern of burgage plots and filling up the available spaces with cottages, but in point of fact it seems not to have preceded the first phase of outward expansion, but to have followed it. I have looked at two localities in detail: St John's Ward and Friargate.

Locality 1: St John's Ward

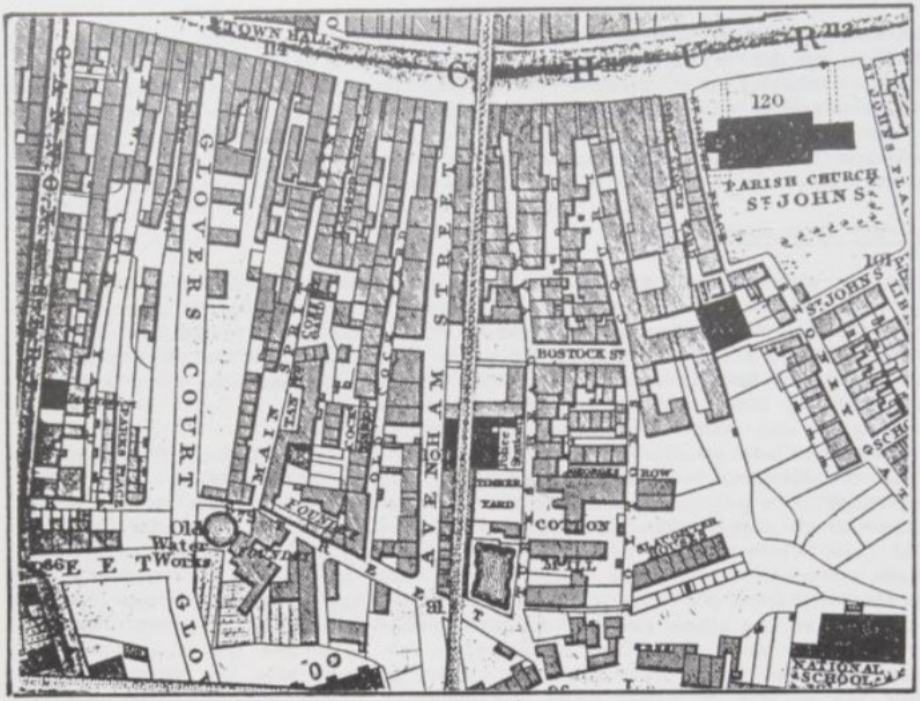
The area which I chose for detailed study is a block about 200 metres wide on the south side of the main thoroughfare formed by Fishergate and Church Street, between the parish church and Cannon Street. Detailed comparison of maps drawn between 1809 and 1849 shows where space was found for the building of dwellings right here in the centre of the old town, opposite the Town Hall. The Land Tax and Census records show how it was used.

Shakeshaft's map of 1809 [Fig.28] shows that at the beginning of the century most of this area was still occupied by gardens, though there were a few workshops or warehouses (shaded darker on the map), and some long blocks of houses or cottages. Cannon Street and Avenham Street did not exist at all at that date. Glovers Court, nowadays a busy one-way street, was a track running beside an ornamental garden, which stopped short at the top of a narrow field between orchards. Old Cock Yard, flanked at the top by houses on one side and workshops on the other, faded into a path beside something like a vegetable plot. But half way down New Cock Yard was a row of houses (see Plate 5U below) This yard, and Turks Head Yard and Bolton's Court near the church, already show the pattern to come: small workshops or warehouses, and short rows of cottages fitted piecemeal into the available spaces.

Fig.28: Area west of parish church in 1809: from Shakeshaft's map.



(reproduced with permission of Lancashire County Library, Preston District)



(reproduced with permission of Lancashire County Library, Preston District)

Fig.29: Area west of parish church in 1836: from Myres' map

By 1836, when the surveyor J.J.Myres drew the first really accurate map of Preston [Fig.29], Cannon Street had been built and lined with houses right down to the Syke at the bottom; Avenham Street had been fitted in between Old Cock Yard and Turks Head Yard, with buildings on both sides of it (including the Police Station, which was also the place where the horse-drawn fire engine was kept); and between Turks Head Yard and Bolton's Court continuing development had brought cotton mill buildings, a timber yard, slaughter houses, and a couple of rows of very small cottages. The rest of the spaces were quickly filled in, forming a warren of narrow alleys and courts.

According to the 60-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1847 [Fig.30], a person walking westwards from the Parish Church to Cannon Street, a distance of only a couple of hundred yards, would have passed fifteen "entries" where he could turn left into narrow allies or streets, twelve of them through covered entrances. Those named on this map are Graystock's Yard, the Bull Yard, Bolton's Court, Turks Head Yard, Avenham Street, Old Cock Yard, Addison's Yard, Main Sprit Weind, Glovers Court, Park's Court, and New Cock Yard. Buildings in New Cock Yard demolished as recently as 1986 proved that this was once the site of a large town house dating from about 1700 (a wing to the rear of a Fishergate shop - which itself once had a rainwater head dated 1756 - had an upper cruck roof); and the former barn on the opposite side of the yard had been converted to cottages in the 19th century, their doors facing the yard on the other side.

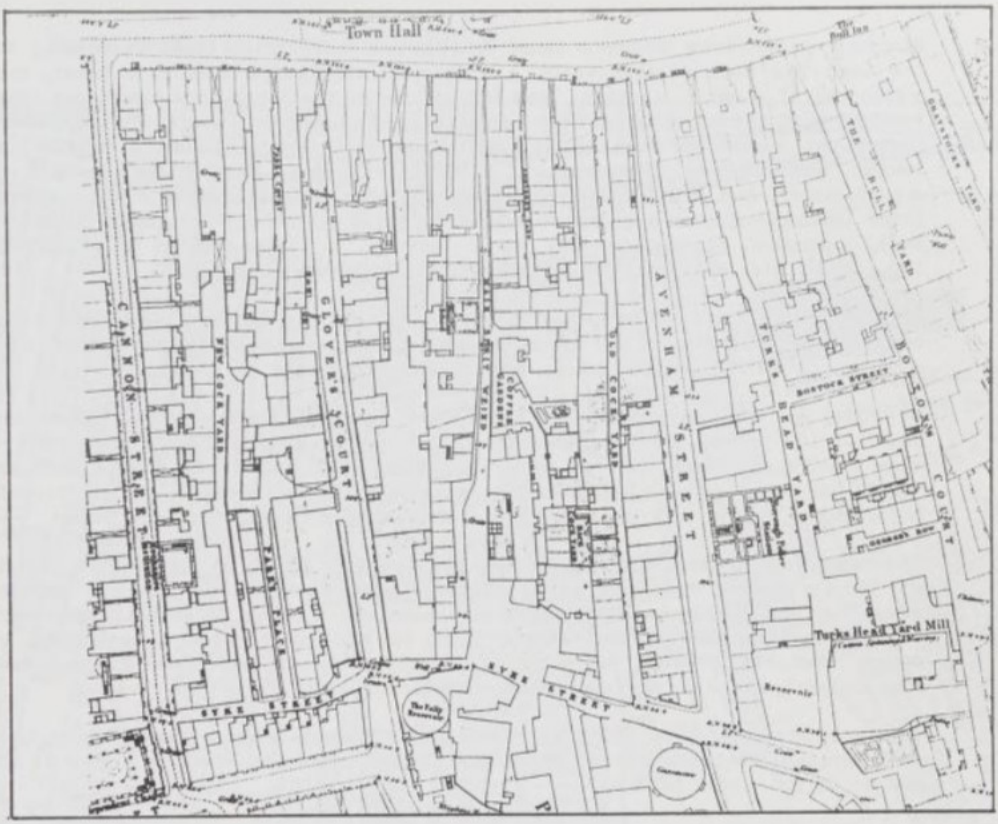


Fig.30: Area west of parish church in 1847: from 60-inch O.S. map

This is what the inspector from the General Board of health in London, Mr G.T.Clarke, found when he visited Preston in 1849:-

> 30. *Turk's Head-yard*, on the south side of Church-street, is a long irregular alley, rather narrow, paved and without efficient drains. Here are several filthy corners, and a very large cesspit, said to be the largest in the town, receiving the contents of six privies. Close by is a large slaughter-house in a dirty condition and giving out a most offensive smell. Mahommed's lodging-house, in a dirty crowded condition, is in this yard.
>
> 31. *Bolton's-court*, in a yard, has a range of piggeries and open dung-heaps, with a large trough for the storing and mixing of manure. Near is the National School with 700 or 800 children, and on the opposite side are the gas-works, once in the suburb, but beyond which the town has rapidly spread. In Bolton's-court are also eight public slaughter-houses, held from year to year under the Earl of Derby. They are in a very discreditable condition, and are stocked with pigs. The smell at the time of my visit was very bad.
>
> 32. Between the backs of Stoney-gate and Library-street, is a narrow and very filthy passage, with an open gutter between two rows of open cesspools, clogged with accumulations of night soil. It seems to have been the plan, at one time, to build rows of cottages with this sort of narrow alley between them for the purposes of getting at their back premises. Such an alley, in Preston, is sure to be a receptacle for filth.

Stepping warily down Bolton's Court in 1830 we would have found (according to the Land Tax book of that year), a smithy, a wheelwright's shop, a joiner, the warehouse of a spirit merchant, and the offices of the local Tory newspaper (the Preston Pilot); then a short side-turning, Bostock Street, where five landlords rented out eleven premises to various tenants, including a joiner, a butcher, a lawyer and leading Tory local politician (Joseph Bray), and a cotton manufacturer; and lower down, near the slaughter houses, George's Row, where three landlords shared a group of twelve cottages (eight of them built back-to-back) occupied by the families of a butcher, a chaise driver, a bailiff, a fishmonger, and four men who were employed in cotton mills.

In Turks Head Yard 24 premises distributed among 13 different landlords were occupied by such people as coach drivers, shoemakers, tea dealers, cotton mill workers, painters, curriers, tailors, and a police constable.

By 1851, according to the Census Returns of that year, Bolton's Court was the home of 103 people. In "Back Bolton's Court" - probably the old George's Row - were twelve dwellings, four of them in cellars, inhabited by 42 people such as "spade labourers", shoemakers, basket makers, milliners, charwomen, and errand boys; and an ostler with six children and four lodgers lived in Bostock Street.

The same year found 77 people in the nine dwellings of Turks Head Court. Nos.5 and 6 were then combined as a lodging house, where there were 35 people altogether, including hawkers, picture dealers, a German musician, and nine "earthenware dealers". Other people living in this court were a bookseller, a police constable (perhaps the same as in 1830, and now with four children and two lodgers), and a journeyman tailor with six children.

To appreciate what this meant as a living environment, a good starting point is a walk through what are left of these yards. (And remember, this is only a small sample of the whole pattern.)

It is very difficult to find out what the buildings in these courtyards looked like; or, what is more important, how high they were. They were either succeeded in their turn by commercial development in the later 19th or 20th centuries, or demolished long ago. Very few photographs exist, but among them are some which show the row of houses on the long slope of New Cock Yard, two of which, and the remains of some others, have survived to this day. These were tall - three storeys over a half-sunk basement - but they were probably not typical of courtyard building in this area, but rather of the those which I deal with in Chapter III.

Fig.31: Section of Myres' map enlarged to show certain yards

(reproduced with permission of Lancashire County Library, Preston District)

Locality 2: Friargate

In 1851 three middle-aged weavers - Betty Martindale, Nancy Howarth, and Nancy Slater - knew one another very well. They must have done, because they lived on their own at Nos. 4, 5, and 6 Walkers Court, in Friargate. Walkers Court was a crooked passage little wider than the door which nowadays closes the entry to it. In this almost unbelievably small courtyard the census of 1851 recorded 22 people inhabiting seven separate dwellings; and there was apparently still room for more, because eleven years later there were ten cottages and 39 people there (sharing one privy: see below p.37).

Fig.32: Walkers Court

Walkers Court was one of many such yards in Friargate. The pretty pattern which this area makes on the map [Fig.33], like the spine of a fish, strongly suggests that these courtyards and streets developed organically, built in the medieval burgage plots piecemeal and without plan. Evidence about the pattern of ownership confirms this.

The first appears in notices of auction or sale printed in the local newspapers. (The two shown here were accidental discoveries, but systematic searching would certainly reveal others.) In the 1844 auction [Fig.34], Lot 3, a tailor's shop and dwelling house, included seven cottages in the court behind; and in the other [Fig.35] there were two similar examples: Lot 1, two shops and a dwelling house with three cottages behind them, and Lot 2, a shop and dwelling house with two "Cottages and Workshops" behind (perhaps the type described in Chapter III). So, in these three examples, the owners of five houses on Friargate possessed a total of twelve others hidden behind them. [On page 13 above the reader will already have found another example which I myself did not notice until I was pasting it onto that page.]

A sample of title deeds in the County Record Office produced three more examples of the same pattern, all of them with plot plans attached to them. The first includes a document of 1800 referring to:-

> "those two several Messuages or Dwelling Houses . . . on the north side of Friergate . . . And Also all those four other Messuages or Dwelling Houses . . . behind the same . . ." [6]

The deed plan shows shapes which identify this as Taylor's Yard, on the north side of Friargate and opposite Mellings Yard.

The other deeds referred to Chapel Yard [7] and Nags Head Yard [8] on the south side of the street. There was a large house and shop at the west corner of Chapel Yard and Friargate, another house behind and adjoining this, facing the

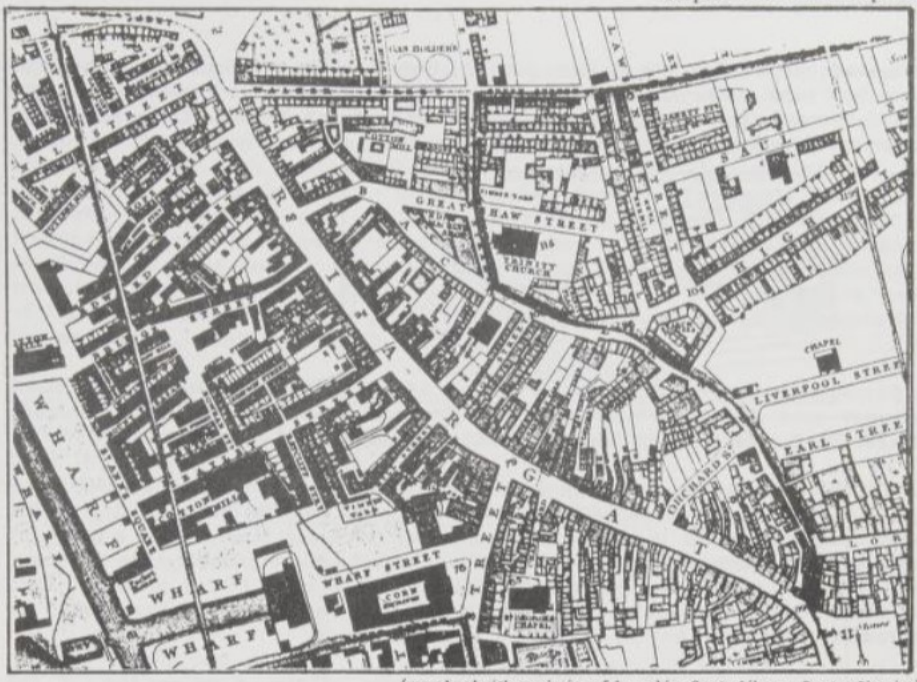


Fig.33: Friargate in 1836, from Myres' map

Fig.34: Notice of auction, 1844

To be Sold by Auction,

BY MR. DUCKETT,

At the House of Mr. R. Lucas, the White Hart Inn, in Preston, on Friday, the 20th Day of December, 1844, at Six o'Clock in the Evening, precisely, in the following Lots, or in such other Lots as may be agreed upon, and subject to such conditions as shall be then and there produced; the Fee Simple and Inheritance of and in

Lot 1.

ALL that old and well-accustomed MARKET HOUSE and INN, called or known by the name of the WHITE HART, situate in the Gin Bow Entry, in Preston, with the BREWHOUSE and STABLE thereunto belonging, and now in the occupation of the said Robert Lucas.

Lot 2.—All that WAREHOUSE and STABLE, situate near the Ward's End, in the Shambles, within Preston, in the occupation of the said Robert Lucas.

Lot 3.—All that MESSUAGE or DWELLING HOUSE and SHOP, situate on the North East side of Friargate, in Preston aforesaid, and now in the occupation of Mr. Lupton, Tailor. Together with all those Seven COTTAGES or DWELLING HOUSES, situate in the Court behind the same, called Shepherd's Court, and now in the occupation of John Slane and others.

Lot 4.—All that COTTAGE or DWELLING HOUSE, with the Orchard, Garden, and Outbuildings thereunto belonging, situate in Little Eccleston-with-Larbrick, containing in the whole 23 Perches of Land, or thereabouts, and now used as a Police Station.

N.B. This Lot is held for the Life of an individual now aged 44, or thereabouts.

Lot 5.—Three SHARES in the PRESTON GAS LIGHT COMPANY, Nos. 524, 525, and 1342.

Lot 6.—One SHARE, No. 82, £100 Stock A. in the NORTH UNION RAILWAY COMPANY.

The Tenants will show the Premises, and for further particulars apply to Mr. James Tenay, of Church-street, Preston, Corn Dealer; Mr. Richard Walker, of Layton Hall, near Blackpool; Mr. William Walker, of Thistleton; or at the Office of Mr. George Todd, Solicitor, Water-street, Preston.

Fig.35: Notice of auction, 1851

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

BY MR. H. P. WATSON,

(By Order of the Assignees of Westby Walker a Bankrupt.)

At the house of Mr. Howarth, the Waterloo Inn, in Friargate, within Preston, in the county of Lancaster, on Tuesday, the seventh day of October next, at seven o'clock in the evening, subject to conditions then to be produced, and in the following or such other lots as may be agreed upon at the time of sale:—

Lot 1.

ALL those two SHOPS and a DWELLING-HOUSE fronting to Friargate aforesaid, numbered 55, 56, and 57, in the occupation of D. Dowall, John Alexander, and William Bamber. Also those three Cottages at the back thereof, in the occupation of James Atkinson, Mary Helme, and James Dagger, together with a large plot of Land behind the same.

Lot 2.—All that SHOP and DWELLING-HOUSE fronting Friargate aforesaid, being numbered 81 and 84, in the occupation of Thomas Kay, and — Gradwell. Also those two Cottages and Workshops behind the same, in the possession of Thomas Stirzaker, together with a plot of Land behind the same.

Lot 3.—All those four MESSUAGES or DWELLING-HOUSES, situate on the east side of Snow Hill, within Preston aforesaid, and numbered 24, 25, 26, and 27, and also all that Messuage or Dwelling-house and Bake-house fronting to, and on the north side of High-street, within Preston aforesaid, numbered 1 and 2, now, or late in the possession of James Kirby and Ralph Dawson, (this lot is subject to an annual rent of £6 5s., and will be sold for the residue of a term of 999 years.)

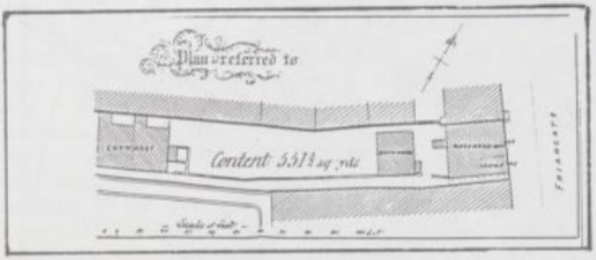
Lot 4.—All those two Seats or PEWS, situate in the south gallery of Saint George's Chapel, in Preston aforesaid, and now, or late in the occupation of Mr. Edward Harrison and Mr. Joseph Thackeray.

Lot 5.—All those thirty-five SHARES in the Fleetwood, Preston, and West Riding Railway.

Particulars as to lots 2 and 3 may be known on application to Mr. Robert Ascroft, Solicitor to the Mortgagee; and as to all the lots, at the office of Messieurs William Blackhurst and Son, Solicitors, 11, Cannon-street, Preston, where Plans of Lots 1 and 2 may be seen.

Preston, 19th September, 1851.

yard, and beyond this two smaller houses which in their turn had two cottages in their backyards. (The site is now a car park.) Nags Head Yard had two cottages at the far end, beyond the brewhouse. The totals found in these three packets of deeds are four buildings on Friargate with another eleven behind them.



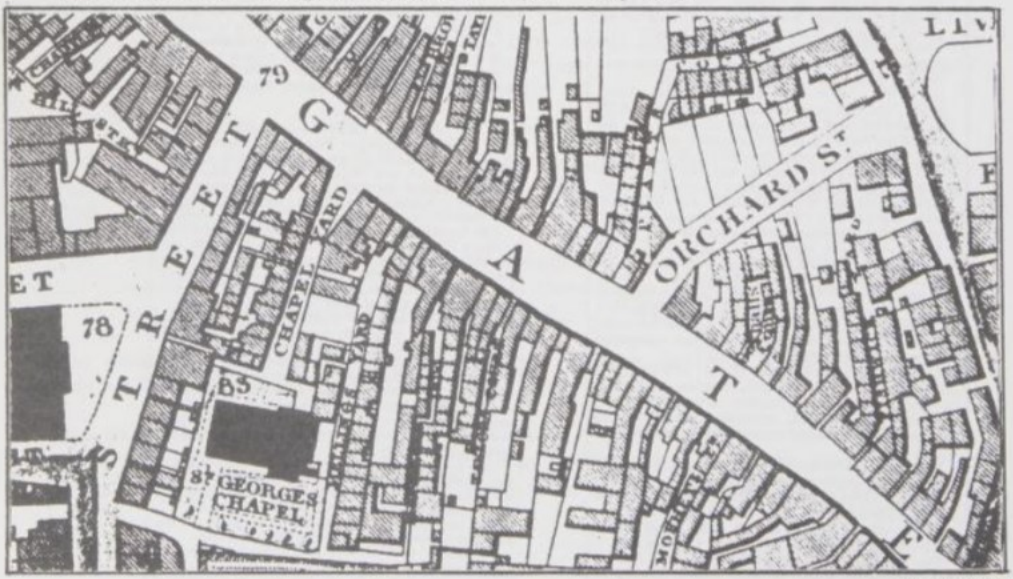
Reproduced by kind permission of Lancashire County Record Office

Fig.36: Deed plan to Nags Head, showing cottages in yard

In all these examples the cottages behind belonged to the house at the front, and the Land Tax book of 1830 confirms that this was the normal pattern. The most likely reason for it is that the owners of the front houses were making the most of their gardens: rent-paying cottagers were more profitable than potatoes, and the investment was a permanent addition to the value of the property. Each of these courts and yards was a reflection in miniature of the effect of increasing population on the town as a whole.

As far as one can tell from the detail given on the maps, a few of the Friargate yards were already complete at the very beginning of the 19th century, but most were developed in the 1820's and 1830's. The long row in Mellings Yard, for example, appears between 1825 and 1836. This timing is similar to what we have already discovered about the yards of St John's Ward.

Fig.37: Detail of Friargate Yards, from Myres' map 1836



(Harris Library)

So is the peopling of the Friargate yards. Hardman's, for example, a passage so constricted that the map-maker could hardly fit the name of it into the space on his map, had a population of 100 in 1851 (about half of the households being Irish): just inside the entry, two shoemakers and a fishmonger, and in the dark recesses further back, various labourers, a "cordwainer" (i.e. shoemaker), and some cotton workers, including - at an address given as "Hardman's Yard (back, cellar)" - a widow who was a handloom weaver. At the same date Chapel Yard was occupied by the almost incredible number of 147 people (as large a population as some country villages), nearly all of them immigrants to the town from the local countryside. Again, their occupations were very mixed: the smell of this yard must have been a rich blend of flavours, such as beer, printer's ink, tea and coffee, wool, leather, cork, and poultry.

Early in 1862 (and shortly after The Builder's descriptions of Preston, quoted in chapter I) the Sewerage Committee of the Local Board of Health (i.e. Council) called for a report on the courts on the south side of Friargate. Their Minute Book [9] contains the following table:-

Table 2: Friargate Courtyards in 1862

	No.of houses	Population	No. of privies
1 Taylors Court	4	25	3
2 Hardmans Yard	21	95	3
3 Mellings Yard	15	80	4
4 Back Chapel Yard	5	19	2
5 Chadwicks Yard	1	3	1
6 Nags Head Yard	2	2	1
7 Seeds Yard	4	14	2
8 Westbys Yard	3	10	2
9 Walkers Court	10	39	1

No explanation is given in the minutes for choosing only these nine; and in the minutes of the next meeting three of these were singled out for further comment by the Borough Surveyor. This begins:-

> "It is impossible to make these Courts namely Hardmans Yard Mellings Yard and Walkers Court as salubrious as districts possessing larger houses wider streets and better natural ventilation. Many of the houses in Hardmans Yard do not stand upon more than eleven square yards of land exclusive of the narrow passage leading to and in front of them. These houses have but one small living room about 9 feet square and a low bedroom of similar dimensions above."

In 1851 twenty of these tiny one-up-one-down cottages in Hardman's Yard were inhabited by a total of 100 people; several had six, seven, or eight occupants, and in two of them there dwelt as many as eleven (enjoying less than one square yard each, when you think about it).

Part of the pleasure of a stroll along Friargate nowadays comes from its sense of old-world severalty. Gently winding and undulating, it is lined on both sides by a variety of small buildings of different ages and styles, which hint at the pattern of gardens and yards which once lay behind them [Fig.39]. The old "entries" to Walkers Court and Claytons Gate have survived, with their names and dates over them, and there are others which are less easily recognised. Some have been obliterated, and others are difficult to see at all, but the top deck of St George's multistorey car park affords a good view of Mellings, with the remains of Chapel Yard on the left and Hardmans on the right [Fig. 38]. On the opposite side of the road the influence of another old yard (Taylors, perhaps) is shown by the curving plan which it forced on the builders of a modern shop.

Fig.38: Friargate yards seen from multistorey car park, 1987

Fig.39: South side of Friargate, 1987

Looking at what remains of such places it is almost impossible to imagine what they could have been like to live in 150 years ago, but historians and geographers are wont to theorise about this. Since each courtyard formed a single cell of tightly-packed dwellings, sharing one communal space off the main street, the pattern has been described as "cellular". The physical nature of the cellular pattern is not difficult to discover, but its social characteristics and their effects must be mainly beyond the reach of objective research. Was a courtyard one big happy family of mutual support, was it a seething den of vice, or was it a miniature battlefield in the struggle for survival? We may never know; but, whatever the reality, it lasted until the end of the century.

Contemporaries were keenly aware of some of the effects of over-crowding. As early as 1820 the Select Vestry (which administered poor relief) was trying to stem the tide of immigration by getting rid of settlers from other parishes: the town was rapidly increasing in population "in consequence of the great Influx of Persons who seek for Employment and become occupiers of cottages, cellars, and other inferior dwellings" [10]. In 1829 the vicar of St Paul's church, pleading for money to build a new school, wrote:-

> "My church is situated in a district containing five manufactories where children - as young as nine or younger - are employed. This circumstance induces the poor that have large young families to come and reside in the neighbourhood . . . At present our streets are perfectly crowded, and present a scene the most deplorable . . . The people are more barbarous and uncivilised than it is possible for anyone to conceive who has not been amongst them." [11]

And in 1844 the Vicar of Preston expressed his fear of "a mass of uncultivated mind, of corruption and demoralisation, which was ready to burst forth with a torrent's might, and spread violence and devastation."

Even more eloquent, perhaps, were the actual outbreaks of violence in the streets, such as the attack on the Irish quarter of Friargate in 1837, and the election riots which filled the Bull Hotel with cobblestones. As Mr Holmes recalled from the comfort and peace of his armchair in 1903, "there seemed more life and fire then in everything".

Such was Preston's experience of a pattern of town dwelling which was becoming common in English towns in the first half of the 19th century. The next chapter, by contrast, deals with housing which was peculiar to the place and its industry.

Chapter III

INDUSTRIAL HOUSING OF THE HANDLOOM PHASE

Finding and counting handloom weavers' houses in Preston

A few old photographs of Preston streets show scenes quite different from anything in the town nowadays. The picture of Snow Hill [Fig. 40] is an example. Such pictures are tantalisingly scarce: probably because photographers are usually indifferent to what appear to be mundane surroundings until it is almost too late to record them.

The extraordinary characteristic of the cottages in Snow Hill is the elevated position of their doors, with large flights of steps to reach them. Although they were only small two-up-two-down dwellings they had disproportionately large basements. Other old photographs of Preston show similar buildings. There is nothing like them in the town now, but in the village of Wheelton (a few miles to the south east of Preston) a short row of cottages in Albert Street has the same features [Fig. 41]. Unfinished masonry at the top left corner shows that the row was intended to be continued, but that something put a stop to it: early in the 19th century Wheelton had been a village of handloom weavers, but about mid century a power-loom factory was built there. Both these and the cottages in Snow Hill had been built for handloom weavers, with loomshops in their cellars or basements.

Given the rapid growth of the mechanised cotton spinning industry in Preston from the 1790 s, the continued dependence of manufacturers on handloom weaving until at least 1840, and that there were perhaps as many as three thousand handloom weavers in the town in the 1830's (see chapter I), there must have been a large number of houses built for weaving. To anticipate the results of the investigation which follows, I think the number was well over a thousand. This would be a tenth of all the houses in the town in 1841, or a quarter of the total in 1821 if all of them had been built by that date (and I think they had); but it is impossible to be confident that any particular figure is accurate.

The problem is finding them. The sources which I used for this were principally: old photographs; the large-scale Ordnance Survey and locally published maps mentioned in chapter 2; Rogersons Preston Directory of 1818; the Land Tax books and Census enumerators' returns; the pollbooks and registers of electors; one building plan of 1881; and the Sewer Record maps which appear to date from the 1850's.

At first I thought it would be a simple matter of counting all the houses shown on the 60-inch Ordnance Survey sheets with large flights of steps in front of them [Fig.42]. The scale is large enough to show steps so that you can actually count them, and flights of three or more steps suggest that the ground floor was raised over a basement workshop rather than a mere coal cellar. This method of investigation yielded a total of 660 such houses in 1847, of which 170 were built back-to-back (i.e. joined together by their backs, like "Siamese twins"). They were concentrated mainly in two areas: in the south-east corner of the town, between Horrocks's Yard Works and Samuel Horrocks's house at Lark Hill (which

Fig.40: Cottages on the east side of Snow Hill in Preston (demolished)

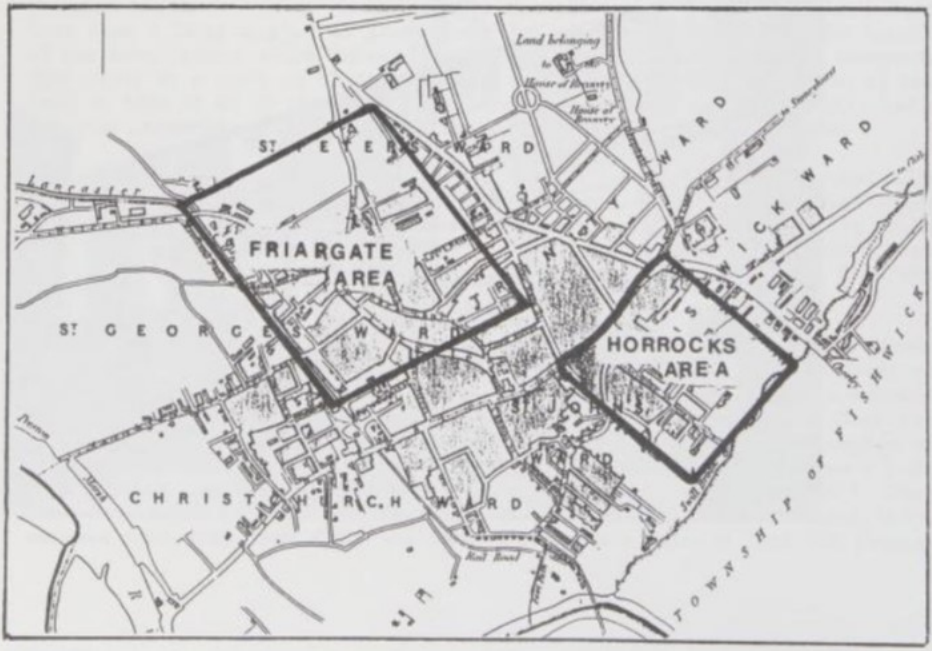
(Reproduced by kind permission of the Lancashire Evening Post)

Fig.41: Cottages at the top of Albert Street in Wheelton

I shall call "the Horrocks area"); and in the north-west, between the canal on one side and Friargate and Fylde Road on the other ("the Friargate area"). These are the places where the earliest spinning mills had been built [Fig.43].

Fig.42: Detail of 1847 O.S. 60-inch map showing houses with steps

Fig.43: Principal handloom weaving areas of Preston



The accidental discovery of a building plan of 1881 raised doubts about the reliability of the Ordnance Survey maps for this purpose, or led to other evidence which did. This building plan (or planning application, as we would call it now) was for the alteration of a row of cottages built much earlier in the century to a form consistent with the Preston Improvement Act of 1880 [12]. The address was Primrose Hill, at the extreme south-east corner of the town. As the illustrations show [Figs.44 and 45], the cottages had been built with the ground floor raised over a basement, and a flight of four steps up to each front door.

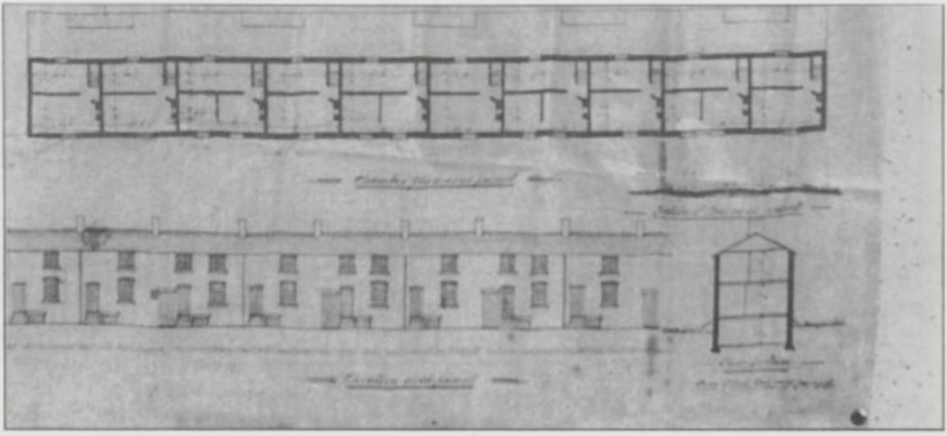


Fig.44 Building plan No.4982, 1881, Primrose Hill (note: row of ten)

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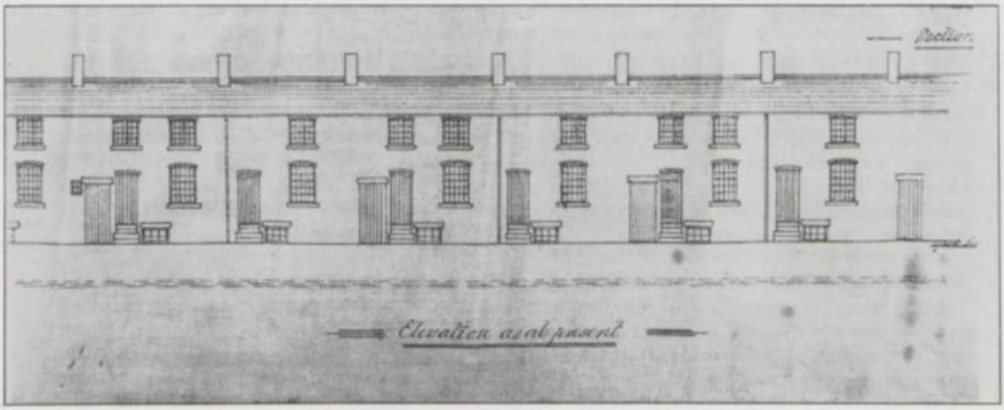
Fig.45 Detail of Fig.44



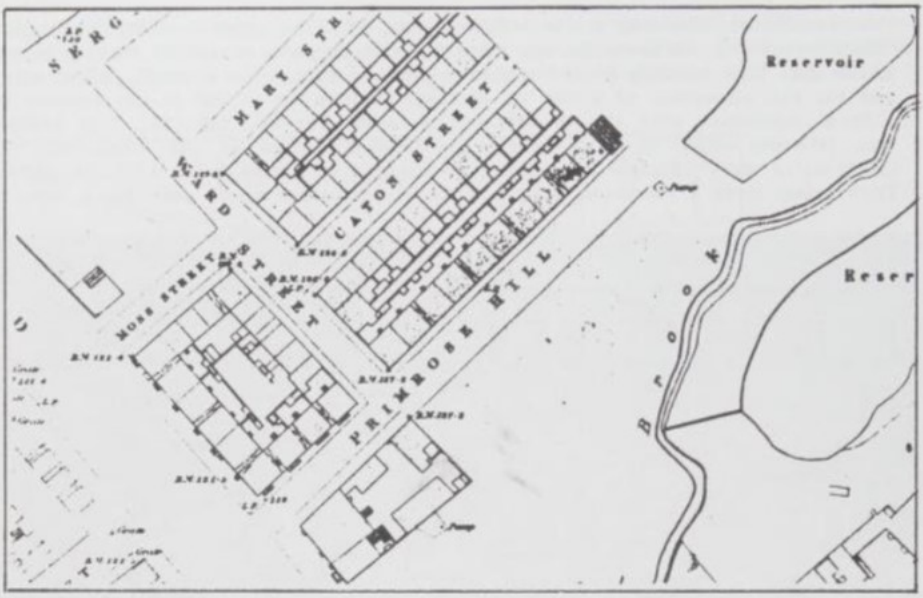


Fig.46: Primrose Hill as shown on 60-inch O.S. map of 1847

This design does not match the information given on the 60-inch Ordnance Survey map, which showed only four houses with such flights of steps. According to Shakeshaft's and Baines's maps, Primrose Hill was built between 1809 and 1825, and some of the details in the drawing (such as the sliding-sash windows) suggest a date nearer 1809 than 1825. It seemed probable that the row had been built for handloom weavers.

The Land Tax book of 1830 and the census returns of 1841 confirmed this. The Land Tax book records eleven houses in Primrose Hill, eight of them occupied by weavers. The evidence of the census is even stronger: 66 "weavers" in a total of 105 inhabitants. The enumerator did not say whether they were handloom or power weavers, and there could hardly have been looms in these cottages for each of the 5, 6, or 7 weavers who were living in some of them, but the percentage of weavers is so exceptionally high that there can be no doubt that Primrose Hill was a weavers' colony. But where were their loomshops?

When Preston was forced to construct its first complete system of sewers, in the 1850 s, the Surveyor had to begin by making a large-scale survey, which resulted in the Sewer Record maps. Because their purpose was to plan drainage, these maps recorded levels: the level is given for the ground floor of every house in the town; and where there was a lower floor, the level of that was shown also (the difference being usually about seven feet). Therefore every house with two levels marked on the map had a cellar or a basement. According to this information, 14 out of 15 houses in Primrose Hill had cellars [Fig.47].

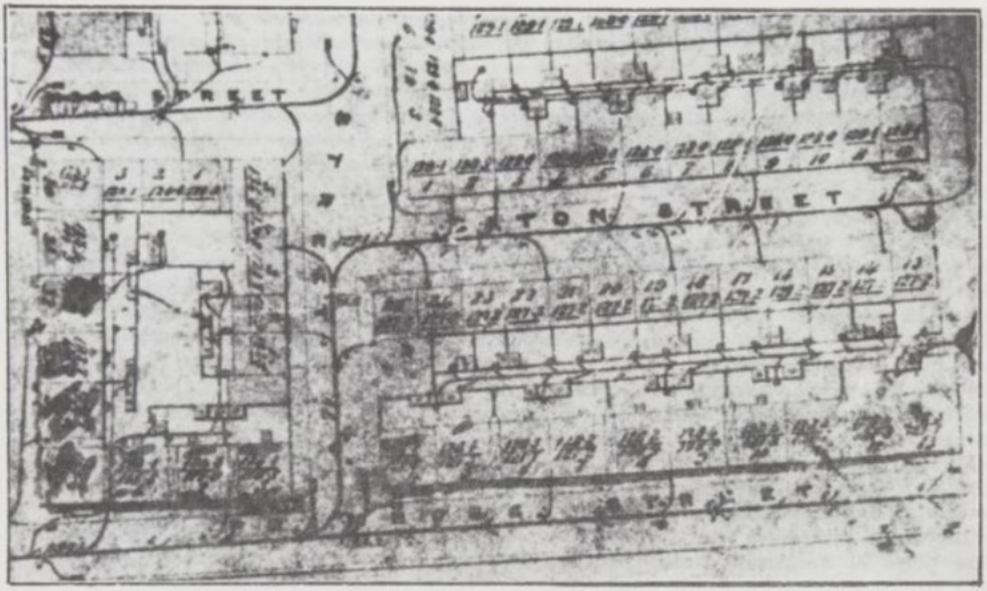


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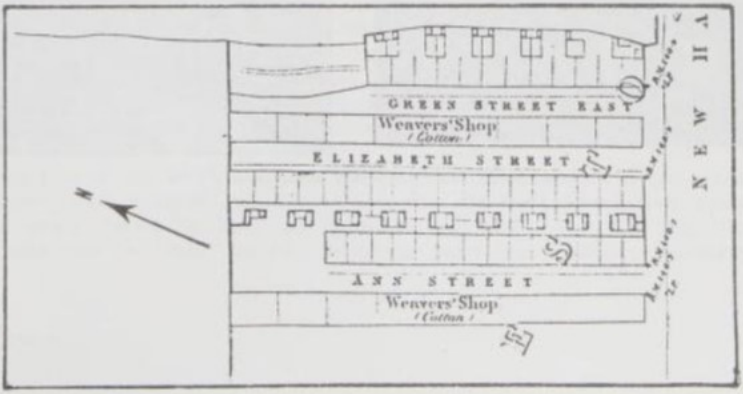
Fig.47: Primrose Hill as shown on Sewer Record Map (the bottom row,here called "Primrose Street")

This discovery suggested that my estimate of the number of cellar-loomshop houses based on counting flights of steps shown on the 60-inch O.S. maps was too low; and that there may have been a variety of types in the town, not all with the tell-tale external steps. In the country districts there were various types of weavers' cottages, many with loomshops on one side of the ground floor, and different arrangements among these also [14]. In Preston there was certainly one small group of buildings different from either: the weavers' colony known as New Preston, built by John Horrocks on the north side of New Hall Lane (where Centenary Mill now stands) consisted of rows of cottages alternating with parallel but separate rows of weaving shops [Fig.48]. This experiment was not repeated in Preston, but one experiment implies others.

Fig.48: "New Preston", built c.1800 by Horrocks (replaced by Centenary Mill in 1891), as shown on O.S. 60-inch map of 1847



The only essential requirement for the weaving of cotton was that the looms should be in a naturally humid position to keep the dressed threads supple, such as at ground level or below. It was not essential for the loomshop to be underneath the living accommodation, or for the steps to be outside. In the photograph of Mount Pleasant [front cover], no steps are visible on the left-hand side of the street, and the doorways are at ground level, but the unusually high position of the ground floor window sills shows that there must have been basements below, and suggests that the steps to the living rooms were in recessed porches.

One reason for building weavers' cottages in the town with the loomshops underneath the lving rooms rather than beside them may have been that the price of land was higher in town than it was in the countryside; an even more likely reason would be the landowner's or the builder's desire to make the most economically efficient use of his site, by putting as many units onto it as he could. It was cheaper to stack the living part of the house on top of the workshop; cheaper still to build the houses back-to-back and only one room deep but one storey higher - 3 storeys over a basement. This was the arrangement in a block built by the Horrocks brothers beside their Moss Mill on Fylde Road [Fig.49]; and there were others like it in New Cock Yard, though not back-to-back [Fig.50]. It may be that most back-to-back cellar-loomshop houses were three storeys high. If not, then they were effectively one-up-one-down cottages, like those in Hardman's Yard [page 37] but with loomshops underneath; and even a 3-storey back-to-back was really only a 3-room cottage on stilts.

If all Preston's loomshops were in basements or cellars then they must have been marked with two levels on the Sewer Record maps, but this evidence alone does not distinguish loomshops from kitchen basements, coal cellars, wash-house

Fig.49: Kirkham Street (demolished)

Fig.50: New Cock Yard (demolished)

(Reproduced by kind permission of Preston Borough Council)

cellars, or wine cellars. There is no certain way of telling the difference, though common sense suggests that there would be no looms in Winckley Square and no vintage port in Starch-house Square. For the more subtle distinctions it is necessary to cross check against other evidence, such as the occupations of residents given in the Land Tax, Census, and electoral records. In doing this one must also bear in mind that a group of streets which was essentially a handloom weaving colony would also include millhands and other workers, and that many of these lived in standard uncellared houses.

With these difficulties in mind, I marked on my copies of the 60-inch Ordnance Survey sheets all those houses which the Sewer Records showed with cellars, but which were not obviously shops or middle-class dwellings; then I eliminated all those which were fronting main streets, or which had rear extensions (because these suggest middle-class accommodation with front parlours and back kitchens). This left me with over 1,400 "probables", of which about 250 were built back-to-back. Allowing for a wide margin of error, and counting only those which could be cross-checked from other sources, still left a minimum of 750 or so. But this is based on map evidence of about 1850, when handloom weaving had been in severe decline for at least ten years, and comparison with earlier maps shows that by that time some of the earliest rows had been partly or wholly demolished to make room for purely industrial buildings; and the example of Primrose Hill shows that obsolete houses could also be completely remodelled. My conclusion is that the total number of cellar-loomshop houses built in Preston was probably well over a thousand.

As far as I can tell from searching the sequence of maps (1809, 1825, and 1836), most of them, if not all, were built before 1825. (Evidence that some of those in and near High Street were built in the early 1790s is given in the section on the Friargate area below). The general pattern was already clear by 1809, when most of the streets with houses of this kind were drawn on Shakeshaft's map. This means that more than a quarter of the 3,612 houses in Preston in 1821 looked something like those illustrated in this chapter; and a few were still being built.

The following sections deal in turn with the "Horrocks area" (the south-east) and the "Friargate area" (the north-west).

The Horrocks Area

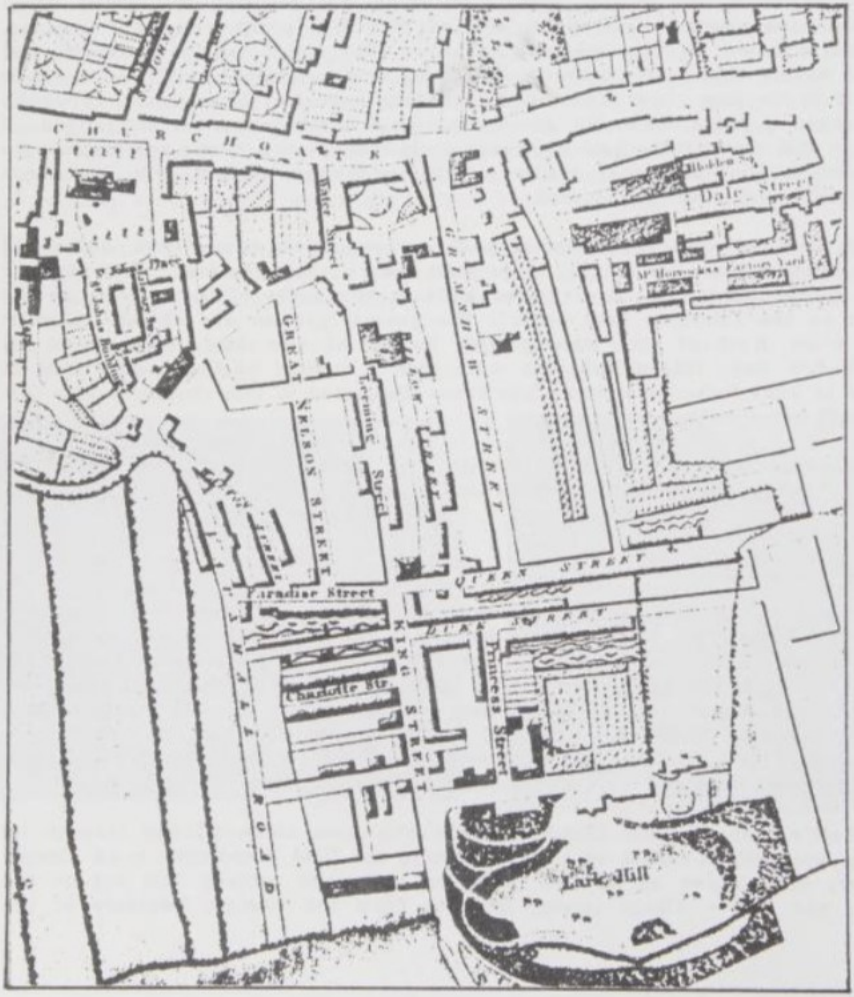
This was the most clearly defined weavers' colony in Preston. It lay between Horrocks's great Yard Works to the north and their Frenchwood Factory to the south. Within the boundary drawn on the sketch map [Fig.43, above] there were about 500 cellar-loomshop houses (if my methods of identifying them are correct), and there were a few other isolated groups of weavers' dwellings nearby, including Primrose Hill and "New Preston". Most of them were demolished in the clearance programmes of the 1960s, when the purpose of their peculiar design, obsolete for about a century, appears to have been forgotten.

Shakeshaft's map of 1809 [Fig.51] caught this area about midway through its development, with a layout of streets ignoring old field boundaries: some already built up, some drawn as lines of intention but never actually laid out on the ground, and one - Albert Street, later to form the western boundary of the

colony - still unthought of. The "estate" (if it can be described as such) had a roughly cross-shaped pattern, Water Street, Leeming Street and King Street forming a continuous road which ran through from north-west to south-east (now called Manchester Road), with Paradise Street and Queen Street crossing it at right-angles. The layout of the streets, with the appearance of having been conceived as a whole, suggests that it was a development by a single landowner or ground landlord (probably John Horrocks), but the later evidence of the Land Tax books shows that the houses were built piecemeal and by many different hands; and this would account for their variety. It is inconceivable that John and Samuel Horrocks would have sat at home demurely waiting for other men to develop the land between their two sites; but I have not yet searched for the original deeds, which would probably settle the matter.

Fig.51: The "Horrocks area" in 1809, as shown on Shakeshaft's map

(reproduced with permission of Lancashire County Library, Preston District)



The earliest phases of building were a little removed from the old part of town on Church Street, being mostly in the southern half of the area, near Samuel Horrocks's newly-built Lark Hill House. This fact, combined with the apparent indifference to existing boundaries, strongly suggests that development here was not an organic extension of a traditional building pattern, but something quite new for a particular purpose. The number of weavers named in Rogerson's Preston Directory of 1818 proves that this purpose was weaving: it names 33 altogether in Charlotte Street and Back Charlotte Street, 18 in King Street, 15 in Queen Street, for example. The character of the houses which had been built by 1809 proves the same point.

There were some additions by 1825, the most important of which was Albert Street, built in a long narrow field on the west side of the area and lined on both sides with cellared houses, - 86 in all. Even at this date the colony was in a semi-rural situation; and, like some of the newly-risen industrial villages of the countryside, it included the homes of the principal employers. The Horrocks brothers had built a pair of large Georgian semi-detached houses (unfortunately demolished in 1964) in Golden Square, at the north-east corner of their works, and although John moved across the river to Penwortham Hall in 1800, Samuel's social ambitions were satisfied by Lark Hill House, which he built in 1797 almost opposite Frenchwood Factory at the south end of King Street [Fig.52]. Golden Square was taken over by their manager (and later partner) Thomas Miller, whose family was still there in 1841. These were the immensely successful and wealthy owners of the new spinning mills, able to distance themselves from their "hands" if they wished. Their lesser brethren, the traditional handloom "manufacturers", appear to have been an integral part of the weaving colony as a whole, some of them running their businesses from homes indistinguishable on the map from the loomshop houses of the weavers. In 1825 two cambric manufacturers lived in Walton Street, another in King Street, and five calico and cambric manufacturers in Water Street and its continuation Leeming Street [Baines' Directory]. In the early 19th century this was not the workng class ghetto which it later became.

Before looking at the houses in detail, one should try to shed the perspectives and values of later periods, and view them as their builders and first tenants would have done, looking forwards from the late 18th century and outwards from the stifling courtyards of the old town, which were becoming ever more congested. (This is not easy to do.)

Fig.52: Lark Hill House c.1820 (illustrated in the Lonsdale Magazine)

The map on the facing page [Fig.53] is a section of the 1847 60-inch Ordnance Survey, to which I have added information about cellars, taken from the Sewer Record maps. Scanning this reveals all the variations except those of height. The houses might be:-

1. either "through-houses", with front and back doors, and these either on a 2-room plan (i.e. two-up-two-down), or a 3-room plan, with an extension at the back (allowing the front room to be used as a parlour: the "parlour house");
   or "back-to-backs", with shared or party walls on three sides and openings only in the front wall (most, but not all, shown on the O.S.map by the division of the rectangle into two squares);

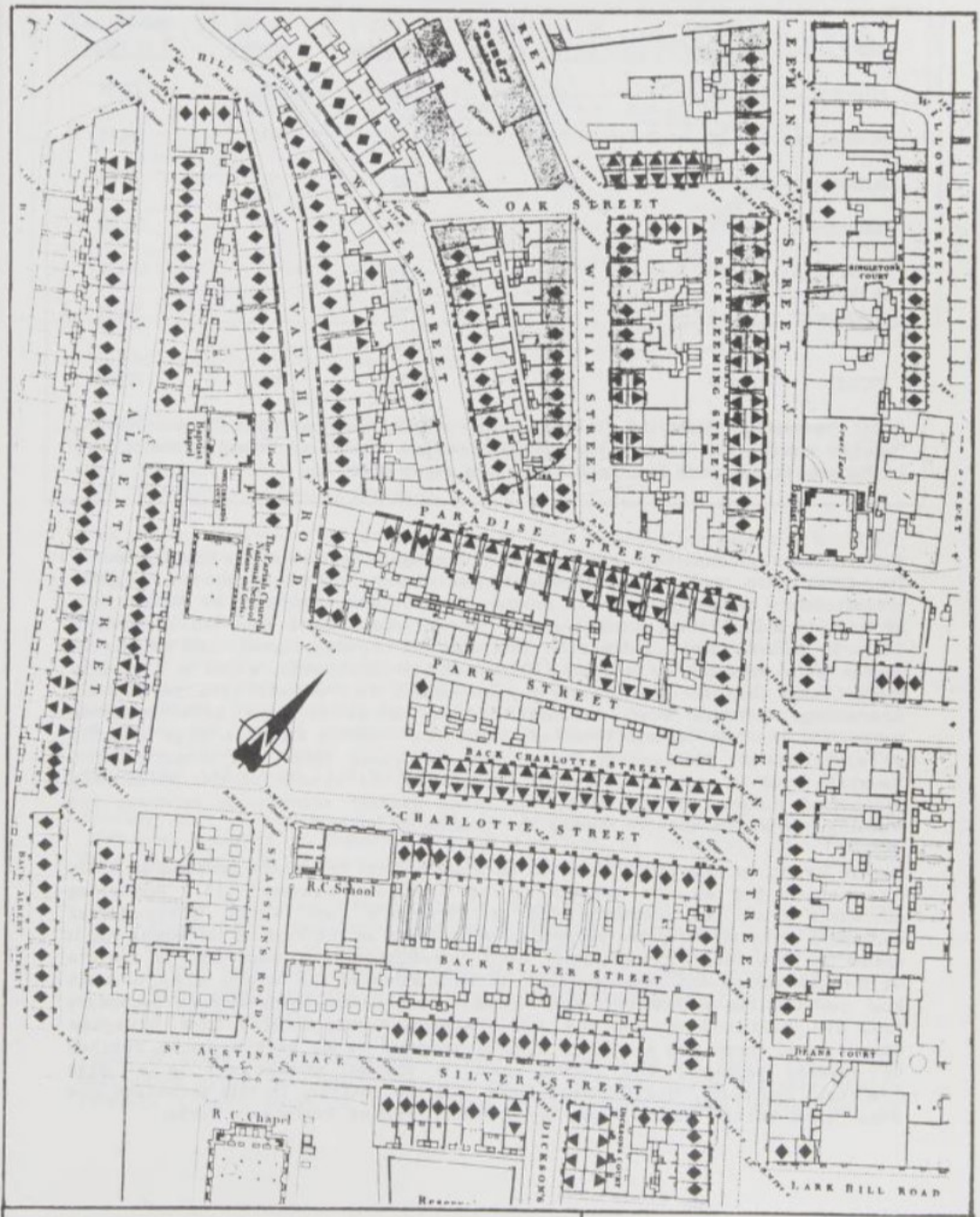
2. either uncellared,
   or cellared, and if so, either with external steps or with some other arrangement;

3. related to rear space in a variety of ways, which I list in descending order of privacy:-
   (a) a private backyard with direct access to it from outside;
   (b) a private backyard with access only through the house;
   (c) a backyard shared with next-door;
   (d) a communal backyard for a row of houses;
   (e) no private outside space at all (i.e. back-to-backs).

These are not dry academic distinctions, because almost all houses in Preston at this time were built without piped water supplies and without drains or sewers (there was no choice in the matter, because there was no water company until 1832, and no systematic sewerage until after 1850). Even shared backyards were rather imperfect, partly for reasons which may be deduced from the map, and partly because "what's everybody's business is nobody's". On the other hand, for people accustomed to living in groups round a common courtyard, they provided a familiar communal environment, albeit a filthy one. Members of a voluntary middle class "Board of Health" formed to meet the cholera scare of 1830 were appalled to discover that women in this area were allowing their children "to commit impurities promiscuously about their dwellings". The little structures shown on the map at the ends of some of the backyards were the privies, and the very narrow passage behind some of these was the place where the privy-pails were emptied: it is not surprising that children preferred to go somewhere else. But how the inhabitants of back-to-backs coped with the matter I cannot imagine.

The Land Tax book of 1830 and the census enumerators' returns of 1841, though late for the hey-day of this area, are the most convenient sources of information about its inhabitants, and the pollbooks can be forced to yield comparable information. All confirm that it was a weavers' colony, but they show that there were marked differences between some streets where weavers were heavily concentrated and others where they were a minority among basket-makers, fishmongers, washerwomen, shopkeepers, and so on. Table 3 gives figures derived from a sample analysis of six of the streets shown on the map.

Fig.53: Cellar-loom shop houses in the Horrocks area



KEY:- "through-houses" ◆ "back-to-backs" ◄►

Table 3: Occupation of six streets in Horrocks area in 1841

Street	No. of houses	No. occupied by weavers	Total population	No. of weavers	Weavers as % of total
Albert St	90	68	522	170	32.5%
Paradise St	22	6	104	11	10.5%
Bk.Charlotte St	16	15	82	31	37.8%
Charlotte St	32	24	206	58	28.2%
Silver St & Bk Silver St	39	24	193	42	21.3%
Dicksons Ct.	5	4	18	4	22.0%
TOTALS	204	141	1,129	316	28.0%

(Note: "weavers" includes the following terms used by the enumerator: "cotton weaver", "handloom weaver", and "weaver"; but excludes "powerloom weaver" and "steamloom weaver": six in Charlotte St., three in Back Charlotte St., and one in Albert St.)

Other streets which I have examined less thoroughly (some not on this section of the map) were similarly populated. Walter Street, home of the two cambric manufacturers in 1825, contained groups of weavers at each end; so did the row of back-to-backs facing Back Leeming Street, where there were 23 weavers in 1841. In Willow Street, behind the east side of Leeming Street, half of the 24 houses were occupied by weavers (39 out of 110 inhabitants, which is a slightly higher ratio than for the streets in the table). Two streets were particularly interesting: Vauxhall Road, because the map seems to show cellar-loomshop houses but the 1841 census recorded only a few weavers among a large majority of washerwomen, fishmongers and so on; and Queen Street for other reasons. Vauxhall Road is probably an early example of the erosion of this industrially specialised colony, as its inhabitants found greater security in servicing the weaving community than in sharing the hazards of its trade.

Queen Street, on the other hand, as an elderly local inhabitant recalled in 1892, "was noted for all the tenants to be handloom weavers" [15]. Stretching eastwards along the southern edge of Horrocks's Yard Works, Queen Street contained at least the same proportion of weavers as the rest of the area, but it seems to have been architecturally more complicated. The maps show a mixture of through-houses and back-to-backs on both sides of the street, some of each kind cellared but others not; and behind those on the north side, a secondary row. The west end of this row was Clarksons Court, entered from Grimshaw Street; next, there was a cottage in each backyard of six back-to-backs, reached by covered passages; and further east, a similar arrangement in a large communal courtyard, Queen Street Court. All the cottages in this secondary row were "blind-backs", built against the boundary wall of Horrocks's works;

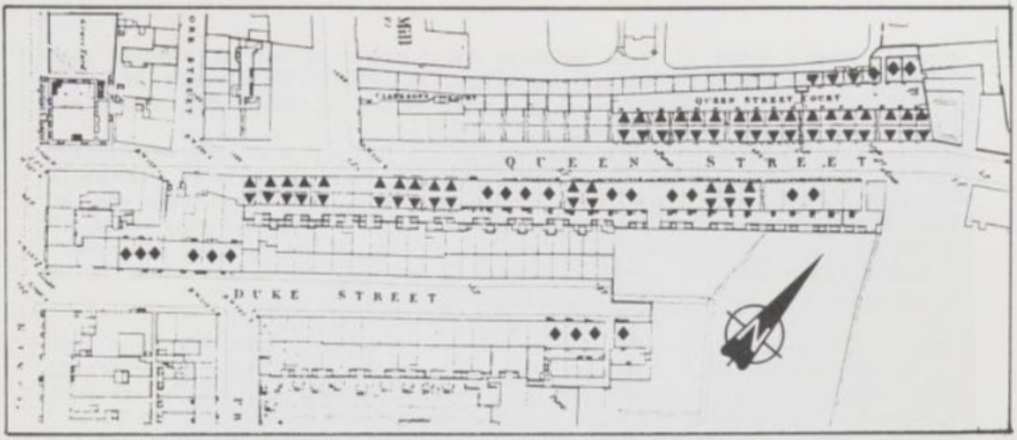


Fig.54: Cellar-loomshop houses in Queen Street

another peculiarity is that although most were uncellared almost all were inhabited by weavers, some of them specifically identified as "handloom weaver" in the census returns of 1851: this suggests that they had looms at ground floor, and may also have been 3-storeyed.

The census enumerator of Queen Street in 1851 recorded not only the handloom weavers themselves (in my sample of 58 households, 45 handloom weavers and only 19 power- or steam-loom weavers, even at that date), but in one section of the street he recorded their cellars as well. For example, 74 Queen Street, occupied by Joseph Banks "Hand Loom Weaver, Cotton" (and family) is followed by "Weaving cellar occupied (weaving only)"; then by 72, Queen Street (another handloom weaver), then "Cellar unoccupied (weaving only)"; next, 73, Queen Street, and another cellar described in the same way; and then 72 and 73 Back Queen Street, both occupied by handloom weavers. The house numbers seem out of order, and further confusion arises from apparent duplication of addresses, such as "Queen Street Ct" with "1st" and "2nd" later inserted by the enumerator (who must have loathed Queen Street).

Finally, there is a scrap of evidence that houses in the Queen Street area may have been designed as vertically stacked dwellings, or tenements. The reporter from The Builder in 1861 (quoted in chapter I) observed:-

> "After [Grimshaw Street] there is Queen Street, with courts out of it; the Druids Arms; then Brewery-street, Malt-street, Hop-street, Vat-street - all running out of Duke Street East. There is no privacy to these houses, as the doors stand open for ventilation, and the tenants of the upper floors must cross the lower rooms to reach the staircases to them." [emphasis added]

(Most of these streets were built after 1847, but it is not clear whether the description applies to Queen Street as well. If so, then this is the only written evidence I have found to explain why some cellar-loomshop houses had no

external steps.) None of these buildings has survived to tell us whether such dwellings were vertically stacked by design, or merely as a result of overcrowding. If by design, then they were another variety of the housing of weavers.

Whatever the variety of types of dwellings in the Horrocks area, the variations in size and convenience were generally downwards from what later became a minimum standard. The maps show very few 3-room plans (and these only on King Street and in front of St Augustine's chapel). Otherwise they were all either 2-room plan through-houses or one-room back-to-backs. The 500 cellar-loomshop houses included 195 back-to-backs; and then there were about 20 of the strange blind-backs behind Queen Street.

Tales of five, six, seven, or even as many as a dozen people sharing a bed, occasionally reported in shock by charitable middle class visitors during the earlier 19th century, are easier to believe when one compares the houses with the numbers of people living in them. For the sample of streets listed in Table 3 the average recorded by the 1841 census was about 5.5 people per house, but the averages for individual streets varied between 3.6 for the five houses in Dicksons Court and 6.4 for the thirty-two houses in Charlotte Street; while in the ninety houses of Albert Street the average was 5.8. This is why the photograph of Albert Street is so important [Fig.55]. It shows that the houses had only two storeys above the cellars, and only one window upstairs, and therefore only four habitable rooms in total. In two-up-two-down houses the back room downstairs was a scullery-cum-wash-house, so the only ordinary living room was the front kitchen. Upstairs there were two bedrooms, the front one bigger than the back.

If we say that it is unlikely that there could have been as many as three beds in a bedrooom - unlikely but just possible - then the maximum number of people who could live in one of these houses without having to share beds would be six; and six chairs in the front kitchen would reduce the standing room in it quite severely. Yet in Albert Street 27 houses were occupied by more than six people in 1841. In 23 of these, with between 7 and 10 occupants, the discomfort must have been obvious; but in the other four, almost unbelieveable. The Jackson family of four had twelve lodgers, and eleven of the household were weavers. The Bolton family with eight children (including a baby) found room to take in four lodgers. The Hartley household contained three different families, amounting to thirteen people in all. Fourteen of the houses in Albert Street had lodgers, but some couples filled their homes by their own efforts alone: there were families of eight, nine, and ten children, several of whom were naturally of working age. Albert Street was relatively superior, however, because there were few back-to-backs in it, most of the houses had privies, and those on the west side had private backyards.

Back Charlotte Street consisted of back-to-back cottages, and Queen Street Court had blind-backs (which amounted to the same thing). If they were 3-storeyed they had three rooms, and if they were 2-storeyed they had only two. Dicksons Court also had back-to-backs, and the photograph [Fig.56] shows that they had only two storeys. Clearly the ceiling of comfort and decency was lower in these dwellings. For one thing, the only downstairs room had to serve as living-room, kitchen, scullery, and wash-house; and if there was only one bedroom above it, then three or four people would be quite enough. In both Back Charlotte Street and Queen Street Court four cottages were inhabited by seven or more people.

Fig.55: Albert Street (demolished)

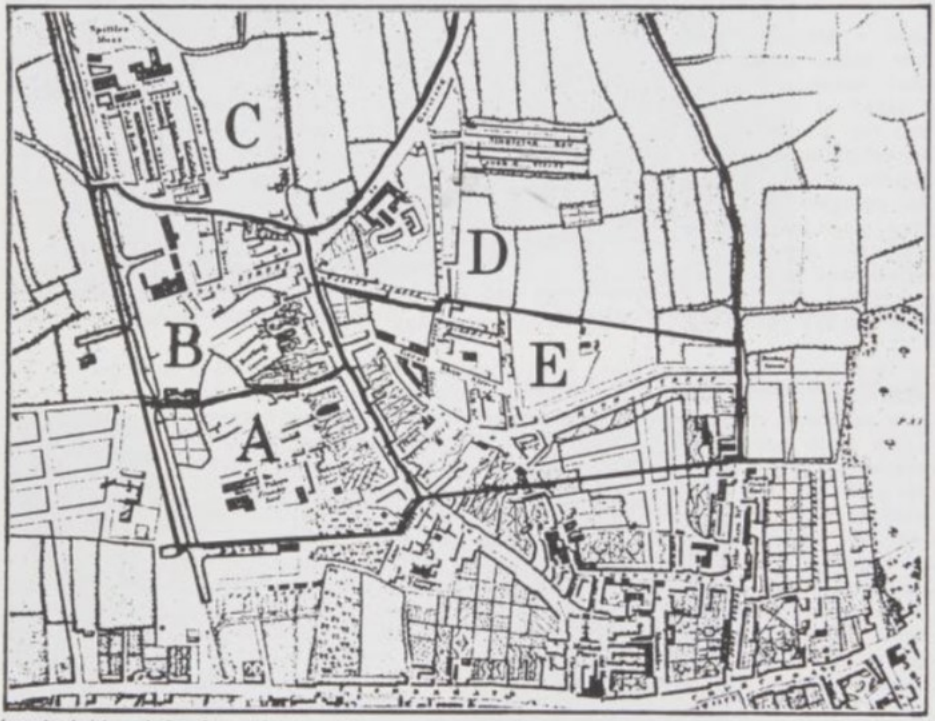
(Reproduced by kind permission of Preston Borough Council)

Fig.56: Dicksons Court (demolished)

(Reproduced by kind permission of Preston Borough Council)

Admittedly, the Census Report for 1841, commenting on the number of houses left vacant by impoverished families who had moved in with neighbours, does point out that Preston was going through hard times in that year. But in the Horrocks area of the town even good times couldn't have been all that good.

Fig.57: Friargate Area in 1809, with handloom weavers' localities added



(reproduced with permission of Lancashire County Library, Preston District)

The Friargate Area

As the map shows [Fig.57], this was less compact than the Horrocks area, and seems to have contained several distinct centres of growth, each probably associated with one of the earliest spinning mills. For ease of reference I have lettered these localities on the map, but this should not be taken to mean that they were in fact isolated from one another: Mr Holmes, the old man whose recollections were quoted in chapter I, was born in Back Bolton Street (locality C), but both he and his father worked at Paley's mill (locality A).

The three localities lining the east side of the canal were associated with mills which must have been under construction even before the canal was opened: Moss Mill (C) and Canal Factory (B), built by John Horrocks in 1796 and 1799 respectively, and John Paley's Heatley Street Mill (A) - which was probably later. The fourth locality, east of Moor Lane (D), containing the very obvious "green-field" development of Singleton Row and Crown Street, may have been the earliest cotton colony in Preston, because the only mill there was Moor Lane Mill, started in 1777 by Collison and Watson with some of Arkwright's first machines (apparently powered by the windmill shown on the corner of the site in Shakeshaft's map: Fig.64). The fifth, Back Lane (E) contained two little spinning mills behind Friargate, Back Lane Mill and Walker Street Mill.

The groups beside Friargate - Heatley Street (A) and Canal Street (B) on the west side, and Back Lane (E) on the east - were new building on old plots and gardens behind the Friargate yards. The other two - Fylde Road (C) and Moor Lane (D) - were new colonies more like the Horrocks area, quite transfoming the "semi-rural place" with its "smiling fields and orchards" which Mr Holmes remembered in his youth.

As in the Horrocks area, these little colonies were already well established by 1809. Most of the cellar-loomshop houses were shown on Shakeshaft's map, and the rest had been added before 1825 (most of these in the Heatley Street patch). The total number was about 640, mostly through-houses [Table 4].

Table 4: Cellar-loomshop houses in five localities of the Friargate area

Locality	Through-houses	Back-to-backs	Total
A (Heatley St.)	119	21	140
B (Canal St.)	109	24	133
C (Fylde Rd.)	13	14	27
D (Moor Lane)	201	0	201
E (Back Lane)	125	15	140
Total	567	74	641

[Sources: 1847 6-inch O.S. map and Sewer Record maps]

In each locality these houses were mostly clustered together either in rows or in "squares" and courtyards. A section of the 1847 Ordnance Survey [Fig.58] shows the pattern in the Heatley Street locality, but the appearance of the place as a whole can be evoked only by the few surviving photographs. Mount Pleasant [Fig.59] is now partly occupied by the County Library headquarters, where all that remains of the ancient scene is the humped and cobbled surface of the streets - much smaller to our eyes than they would have appeared to the residents who (by the 1840 s) had given up trying to keep them clean.

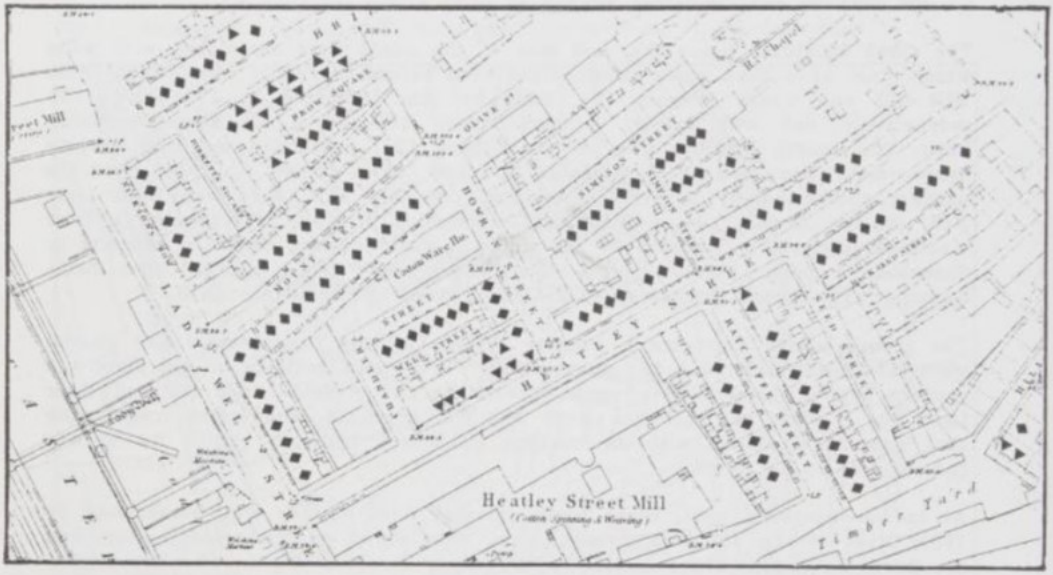


Fig.58: Cellar-loom shop houses in Heatley Street Locality

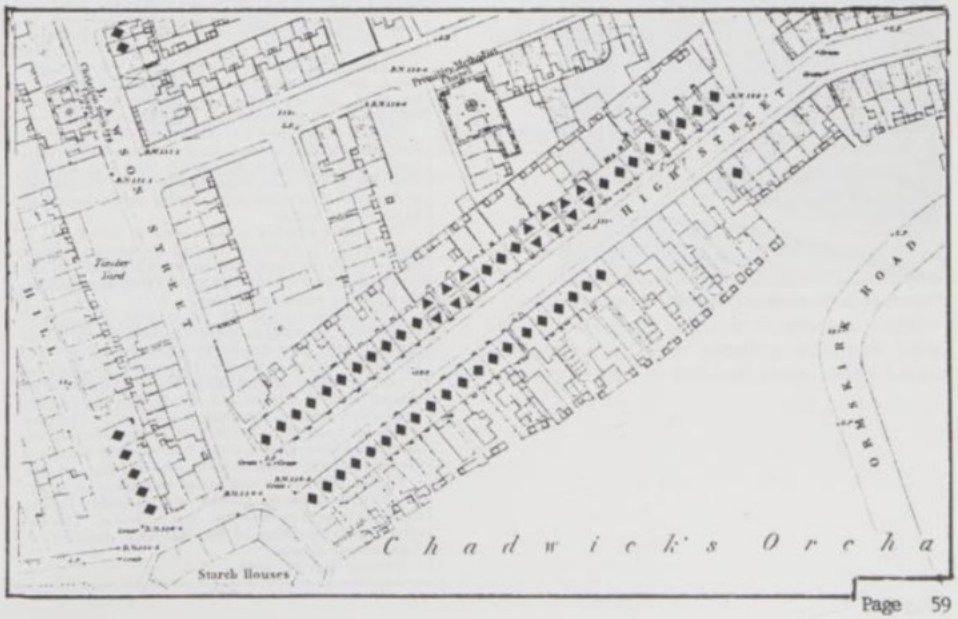
Fig.59: Mount Pleasant Street West in 1952 (see cover picture also)

(Harris Museum and Art Gallery: the Douglas B. Cochrane collection)

Documentary proof that these streets and houses were originally built for handloom weavers once again begins with Rogerson's Directory of 1818, which shows them scattered fairly generally about the area (six in Canal Street, eight in Walker Street, four in Snow Hill, for example), but with a very marked concentration in High Street (see below); otherwise, it depends heavily on later records, such as the Land Tax and the census. In some streets it is convincing, in others, not. According to the Land Tax book, Singleton Row and Crown Street (D) were full of weavers (50 and 75 houses respectively were so occupied), and so were the other streets nearby. In Mount Pleasant (A), however, only one weaver is named in the 1818 Directory, and only three in the 1830 Land Tax, yet in 1841 twenty two houses were occupied by a total of 32 weavers.

The most unambiguous evidence, and in some respects the most interesting, relates to High Street [Fig.60], east of Back Lane (but obliterated by Ringway in the 1960 s). This street appears to have been built in the 1790 s specifically for handloom weavers, when they were a prosperous new class, not the starving horde which they had become a generation later. The deeds of No.27 High Street [16] record that in 1795 James Pedder sold "certain parcels of land for the purpose of building upon" to a partnership of three cabinet makers; that the partnership was dissolved and one of the partners acquired the land and erected two dwelling houses on it; and that in 1798 he then sold these two houses with their gardens, plots, etc. on the north side of High Street, to James Snape, weaver, for the sum of £210. Snape was to keep the property in tenantable repair "so as to be of clear yearly value of £8"; and according to the indenture which recorded this transaction, he had then let the two houses to four tenants, which suggests that the cellars were let separately for weaving. Clearly, building houses for weavers was regarded as a sensible use of money in the 1790 s (even by men who might have invested in their own business) and some weavers could afford to set themselves up as landlords.

Fig.60: Cellar-loomshop houses in High Street, with Snow Hill in bottom left corner (see Fig.40 above)



There is probably more evidence of this kind among the deeds of High Street, but I have not yet made systematic use of it. However, a very similar date of building - 1794 - is mentioned in the notice of auction of a small block of buildings at the bottom of High Street in 1843 [Fig.62]. This also shows that after half a century of handloom weaving, these cellar loomshops (illustrated at the start of this chapter) had only just become obsolete.

Rogerson's Directory of 1818 leaves no doubt that High Street was a weaving colony: it identifies 33 weavers there, which is a larger number than in any other street in Preston. The maps show that most of the western or lower end of High Street consisted of cellar-loomshop houses, and the written sources show that they were occupied by weavers: in the Land Tax book, a continuous row of twelve houses on the north side, and a shorter row on the south side; and in the 1841 census returns, blocks where weavers predominated alternating with sections inhabited by artisans, shopkeepers and so on. Finally, we have eye-witness confirmation from G.T.Clarke's Report on Preston to the General Board of Health in 1849: "In High Street are many cellar dwellings, low and close built, for handloom weavers".

Fig.61: High Street, two loomshop houses on north side

(Reproduced by kind permission of Preston Borough Council)

Fig.62: Notice of auction of houses in Snow Hill and High Street, 1843

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,

On Wednesday the 21st day of June next, at the White Horse Inn, Friargate, Preston, at seven o'clock in the evening, and in the several Lots following, or otherwise, as may be agreed upon at the time of Sale, and subject to such terms and conditions as will be then declared and produced,

LOT 1. ALL those SIX MESSUAGES or DWELLING HOUSES, with the Cellars, Yards, and conveniences belonging thereto, situate on the East-side of Snow Hill, and near to Upper Walker-street, within Preston aforesaid, and which said Messuages are numbered respectively (commencing with that which adjoins Upper Walker-street) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, and are now in the several occupations of Gilbert Sewell, Robert Blackburn, William Howson, Richard Seed, and ——.

LOT 2. — All those FOUR MESSUAGES or DWELLING HOUSES, also situate on the East-side of Snow Hill aforesaid, with the Cellars, Yards, and conveniences to the same belonging, and near to High-street, and which said Four Dwelling Houses are numbered 24, 25, 26, and 27, and are in the respective occupations of Catherine Riley, John Marshall, and ——.

Also, all that MESSUAGE or DWELLING-HOUSE fronting to, and on the north side of High-street, with the Cellar thereunder, and the BAKE-HOUSE at the back, respectively in the occupation of Margaret Heaton and James Kirby, and distinguished by the Nos. 1 and 2.

The Cellars attached to the houses in Lots 1 and 2, numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 25, 26, and 27, having distinct and exclusive entrances from the front of the street, are capable of being let and enjoyed either with or without the houses to which they belong.

Both Lots are Leasehold for an unexpired term of 1000 years, created by an Indenture dated the 1st day of October, 1794, and the Property comprised in each, will be sold subject to the yearly Ground Rent of £6 5s.

LOT 3.—Four several LEASEHOLD RENTS or Annual Sums of £3 13s., £3, £2 2s. 6d., and 17s. 6d respectively secured and charged upon other Property situate in Snow Hill aforesaid, of adequate value, the details and particulars of which Rents and the Securities for the same will be stated at the time and place of sale.

Further information may be had on application to Mr. M. SATTERTHWAITE, Currier and Leather Dealer, Friargate; to Mr. BENSON, jun., Grocer, Church-street; or at the Office of Mr. HAYDOCK, Solicitor, 4, Lune-street, Preston.

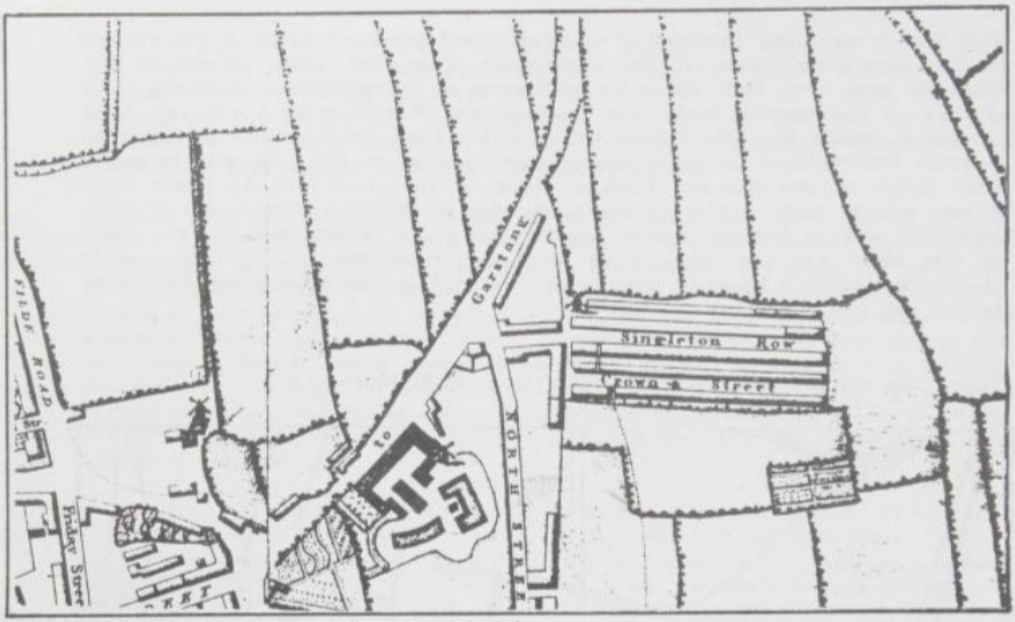
Preston, May 26, 1843.

High Street may have consisted of relatively good houses, built by or for weavers in the prosperous years of the Napoleonic Wars, but other streets in the Friargate area were built either by millowners or by speculative landlords, some of them on the meanest scale. The clearest case of building by a millowner is in locality C, beside Horrocks's Moss Mill in Fylde Road. Here a block of fourteeen 3-storey back-to-back loomshop houses stood parallel to the mill, with fronts to Moss Street on one side and Kirkham Street on the other [Fig.63]. Three other streets ran at right angles to the south side of Kirkham Street, all of them consisting only of 2-storey houses, apparently without cellars. Virtually the whole of this block was the property of Horrocks, Miller and Co. in 1830, and it clearly represents a balanced mixture of industrial accommodation complementary to the mill itself.

Fig.63 The Spittals Moss colony in 1809 (from Shakeshaft's map)

(reproduced with permission of Lancashire County Library, Preston District)

Likewise, the whole of each of Singleton Row and Crown Street (locality D, Moor Lane) [Fig.64, overleaf] was in single ownership in 1830, but not by millowners. Singleton Row was owned by one William Park, perhaps the Friargate "shopman" of this name in the 1825 Directory; and Crown Street by Joseph Robinson, "gent" of 9, Grimshaw Street. The available photographs of this locality are not very helpful, but they do show houses of only two storeys, a few of them with large external steps.



(reproduced with permission of Lancashire County Library, Preston District)

Fig.64: Crown Street and Singleton Row in 1809, from Shakeshaft's map

Most of these streets were built in straight rows, some (like Back Bolton Street), uniform from end to end and therefore probably built as one; but there were other blocks of cottages which were built in quite a different pattern, in small clusters and on very small plots of ground left vacant behind earlier building.

The site of the present roundabouts at the north end of Friargate contained several of these, such as Foster's Square and Hanson's Square, [Fig.65]. To the south, in the Heatley Street locality (A) were two interestingly unusual little blocks [see Fig.58 above]. Chandler Street had a row of half-a-dozen houses which were not back-to-backs but which (in 1852) were numbered differently at the back and known on that side as Well Street; and six similar houses on Simpson Street nearby were also separately numbered at the back. The only explanation that I can think of is that these were vertically stacked separate dwellings, or former cellar-loomshops which became dwellings recognised by such separate addresses. Most of these buildings were swept away in the 1880's when Corporation Street was driven through the area, so there is now no physical evidence at all.

There is hardly any written evidence either, except that which was recorded when these houses, losing their original function, had become examples of some of the worst sanitary problems of the 1840 s. What is now the site of the heaquarters of Lancashire Polytechnic and the roundabouts in front of it, was mentioned in the following passage of John Clay's "Report on the Sanatory Condition of Preston" (1842):-

Fig.65: Cellar-loomshop houses in Canal Street locality

> "There is in the 'lowest deep a lower deep'; and in the 'districts of the worst kind' there are certain streets and courts etc. the worst of the district . . . The names of these are Canal-street, Back Canal-street, Hope-street, Holden's Square, Holden's yard, Edward-street . . ."

- which doesn't give any useful detail. The Builder is a little more helpful, describing the Moss Mill locality in 1861:-

> "In the neighbourhood of Horrocks's fctory . . . is Kirkham-street, where families live in horrible celllars, a second family above them on the ground floor, and a third over that . . . and the yards so confined that the people must hang their clothes to dry in the street, at the doors, on the stairs, over the beds, or else in the terrible choked offal-pits that are within a pace of the back doors . . . Moss-street is occupied on one side by a factory; on the other by a row of back-to-back houses for the operatives.

> The houses have no yards whatever, so the tenants dry their clothes in the street on lines fastened from the fronts of their houses to the factory wall . . . Bedford-street [and others off Adelphi Street] have the same characteristics - families living over families, and washing with poss-tubs in the upper rooms, etc." [He seems to have been there on a Monday.]

In density of population the handloom weaving localities of Friargate were similar to the Horrocks area (so I shall not weary readers by going through all that again), but there was one distinct social difference. The Canal Street locality (B) contained an Irish ghetto, known as "Little Ireland" or "New England". According to the 1851 census returns about a third of the population here had been born in Ireland, and this was evidently a cause of tension, and a further excuse for fighting. Although elections at this time were normally like civil war in a low key, in 1837 the conflict was stoked up by religious and national bigotry, causing a full-scale riot:-

> "In consequence of the shameful destruction which took place on Tuesday night last, that territory of the town known by the name 'New England' presents a most wretched and devastated appearance - the whole of the houses of one street are literally gutted - the windows and doors broken, the miserable occupants in a lost and forlorn condition."
> [Preston Chronicle 29 July 1837]

(This disturbance was deliberately provoked for the purpose of breaking the traditional attachment of Preston's weavers to Radical politics.)

In summary, although the Friargate area was just as clearly a handloom weaving territory as the Horrocks area, it was less compact and more diverse, and was quite obviously not planned or conceived as a whole (though the Horrocks' bit of it in Fylde Road seems to have been). The handloom weaving houses, with cellar loomshops, appear to have been much the same in both areas, but there were fewer of the back-to-back variety in the Friarate area.

Cellar loomshop houses were most heavily concentrated in the Horrocks and the Friargate areas, but they were not confined to them. The last section of this chapter simply points out where some of the others were.

Cellar-loomshop houses in other parts of the town

Small groups and terraces of loomshop houses could be seen in other places, but only as pockets in the general mass of building. Off Fishergate, they formed one side of New Cock Yard [see Fig.50 above], and there were others in Mount Street (with internal rather than external steps) [17]. Off Church Street, they lined both sides of Nile Street [Fig.66]. At the far end of Church Street, between the back of the Lamb Hotel and the north side of Horrocks's Yard works, was Dale Street, with back-to-back cellar-loomshop cottages closing Holden's Square on the north side and cellared through-houses called Bengal Place on the opposite side. North of Church Street, the west side of Spring Gardens was cellared; and Alfred Street [Fig.67], running westwards from St Paul's church, was cellared on both sides, with Buck's Court at its corner formed by cellared back-to-backs. (Most of this particular area is now covered by the new bus station.)

Fig.66: Nile Street

(Reproduced by kind permission of Preston Borough Council)

Fig.67: Arthur Street

Further north, the first nine houses of Great George Street (close to Sleddon's mill mentioned on p.9 above) had cellar loomshops. Away to the west, there was another row, called Gradwell Street, off the north side of Marsh Lane and just to the west of where the railway embankment later crossed it.

There were also isolated rows such as Regent Terrace on Ribbleton Lane, next to the prison yard; and Richmond Row on the north side of New Hall Lane (the position now marked by a terrace of houses with front gardens, which replaced it). Richmond Row consisted of nine houses; in 1838 No.1 was occupied by an overlooker, and all the others by weavers - whom he overlooked presumably. And, of course, there was Primrose Hill, off London Road.

Perhaps it is these isolated rows, never continued (like Albert Street in Wheelton), and some later taken down and rebuilt in more conventional form, which best represent the fate of the Handloom Weaving Phase of industrial housing in Preston. For at least a generation they had determined not only working but also living conditions for about a quarter of the whole population. Most of them were through-houses, but some were back-to-backs; most of them had outside steps rising to the front door, but some had inside steps descending to the cellar. One small model colony in New Hall Lane, called "New Preston", had weaving shops detached between them, but all the others had cellar or basement loomshops. All were very small and frequently desperately overcrowded, and the effects of this were at their worst where they were clustered in colonies. But whatever their form, such dwellings, erected in substantial numbers between 1790 and 1825, were very specifically designed for their function; and, in that period, clearly recognised as such. In 1838 Joseph Livesey (weaver, cheese dealer, temperance leader and political reformer, and founder of the Preston Guardian - in that order) received a visit from a poor woman:-

> "Please, Mr. Livesey, could you give me a recommendation?" - meaning a certificate to the Dispensary. "For yourself?" - "No", replied the woman, "for my husband". "Where do you live?" - "In Albert Street". "He is a weaver, I suppose". - "Yes".

Cellar-loomshop houses belonged to the lop-sided stage of the Industrial Revolution in Preston, when cotton spinning was mechanised, but weaving generally was not. After the 1840 s, when this stage passed, they were stranded in a changed environment, overwhelmed by its rapid growth, and their purpose was gradually forgotten.

CONCLUSION

Somebody once said that the past is another place, and we cannot go there. I hope I have been able to show that the early 19th century past of Preston was very much another place, but that we can go there. (With much time-consuming effort.)

In this town, as I suppose in most other industrial towns, the housing associated with the early phases of the Industrial Revolution was quite surprisingly different from what we normally associate with the idea of an industrial town. One reason for this is that our images of industrial housing are based on what we have seen of it, which was largely the product of the later 19th century. By then the lessons of lack of control had been learnt, and the regulations originating from the Public Health Act of 1848 and subsequent bye-law legislation had imposed the sort of uniformities which are now familiar to us. Another reason is that the housing of the early phases of the industrial revolution was very different: and for industrial reasons.

Domestic industry had its own requirements, different from industry to industry, and within one industry (such as textiles), and different from one place to another according to the nature of the materials or the product. The woollen industry of the Yorkshire Pennines (and bits on the Lancashire side as well) created weavers' cottages with loomshops on the top floor; the cotton industry of Lancashire dictated that they should be on the bottom floor.

It has often been assumed that domestic weaving was a rural industry, the textile towns being primarily their market centres; perhaps because weavers' cottages have survived, or are nowadays easily recognisable, only outside the towns. I do not know whether this assumption has been thoroughly tested in the towns where no structural evidence remains. If it has, then this booklet is simply "an addition to the literature". If it has not, then my work will have been quite useful as well.

The trouble with towns is that they keep re-building themselves, leaving no physical evidence of what was replaced. This presents severe problems to historians; but I think that the historical problem in this place at this time is soluble, given the sources which are available. I would like to think that I have proved it.

These are points which are specific to a time, a place, and an industry; but there is a general point which I believe to be more important: architectural history which is based on the study only of surviving buildings must often be distorted by differential survival. For a proper understanding of the history of housing we must find the houses which aren't there.

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Abbreviations: CBP = County Borough of Preston (in LCRO)
HL = Harris Library
HM = Harris Museum and Art Gallery
LCRO = Lancashire County Record Offic

A. PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Physical

The streets and buildings of Preston and surrounding districts, and especially the interiors of a large number of houses, some during the process of demolition, and many others with the generous permission of their owners and occupiers.

2. Pictures

Photographs of demolished properties LCRO (CBP)
Photographs in the files of the Lancashire Evening Post
Photographs, and other pictures, in the Harris Museum and Art Gallery
Photographs and colour slides by the author, held at Preston Curriculum Development Centre

3. Maps

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Tithe Plan	1840	LCRO
Sewer Records	c.1852	Town Hall
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