THE HIGHWAY FROM PRESTON INTO THE FYLDE.

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INTRODUCTION.

In his manuscript reminiscences, William Hutton of Birmingham records that on 13 October 1788 he lost his way between Preston and Blackpool. To us, who know so well that road which runs, if not like the broad highway which leadeth to destruction, at least with some of its attributes, the idea of getting lost between Preston and Blackpool is somewhat ludicrous. Possibly Hutton would have been more accurate if he had written that he had lost his way between Kirkham and Blackpool; for if one examines Yates' map of Lancashire—the first surveyed map, on the scale of one inch to a mile, published in 1786—one sees that although the road from Preston to Kirkham is shown as a well-marked highway, westward of Kirkham it dissolves into a maze of country lanes, among which it was doubtless most easy to become lost.

At this time the highway to Blackpool was unpaved, thus being in winter—and often in a rainy summer—almost impassable. It has been stated that about 1770 the horse was the only mode of conveyance for goods and passengers.¹ There is, however, some conflict of evidence here, for Hutton states that the approach to Blackpool was through good roads which were safe and easy for the traveller.² Not until 1830 was the road from Kirkham to Blackpool shown on a map as a road of some importance, and not until 1902 was it classified as a main road.

ROMAN AND MEDIÆVAL.

Of Roman and mediæval times one can say little, for there is little to say. A discussion on Danes Pad would be

¹ Thornber, An Historical . . . Account of Blackpool, 1837, p. 208.
² Hutton, A Description of Blackpool . . . , 1789, p. 9.
YATES’ MAP, 1786.
1 inch to 1 mile.
Superimposed are dots to show the old King’s highway between Ashton and Newton, and lines to show straightenings of the old road.
unprofitable before a thorough investigation is made on the ground and from the air; although it must be stated that there are strong indications of there having been a small station at Kirkham in late Roman times. That a road would be made to it from Ribchester seems certain, and this view is supported by charter evidence.

About 1190 William son of Richard of Biscopam gave to Cockersand Abbey¹ certain land in Newton naming, among other boundaries, "sicut magna strata se extendit de Dalebrig apud le Lund"—the great street stretching from Dowbridge to Lund.

At about the same time Arthur of Eston gave to his son Richard² property in Ashton, naming among the boundaries the great street—magnam stratum—which descends to the bridge of Gamel over Savock. About a century later there are mentions of "one rood on Wattelingestrete" in English Lea³, and "one rood in the field called Vattelingstrete."⁴ These Watlingstreet field names survived, for we find that on 20 April 1664 it was ordered at the Lea Manor Court "that Will. Helme draw his dich betwixt his Watlingstreet and the Constable Leane," while at the same court on 22 April 1702 an order was made "that the occupants of Mr. Hoghtons Watlenstrite doe macke a suffishant fence betwixt the said Watlenstrite and Wathew Bruer Watlenstrites."⁵ The name also occurs on the Tithe Map of 1838.⁶

A little further evidence is supplied by the fact that a stony patch was found when drains were being put in a field behind Lund vicaragē, in a line between Watlingstreet Road in Fulwood, the Watlingstreet fields in Lea, and Dowbridge.⁷

As stated above, until the site is thoroughly examined a definite indication of the exact track of the road to Kirkham cannot be given, but at least its existence seems fairly certain. Concerning the existence of an early road westward or north-westward from Kirkham, no such certainty exists. At the moment the only evidence seems to be that provided by Mr. Just and the Rev. William Thornber to the Historic Society of Lancashire and

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³ Ibid, p. 31.
⁴ Ibid, p. 35.
⁵ De Hoghton MSS. in the County Record Office.
⁶ In the County Record Office, DRB.
⁷ Inf. Rev. E. Stoney.
Cheshire in 1850 and 1851 respectively\(^1\), and a field called Dain’s Path Carr on the Tithe Map of 1838\(^2\) in Hardhorn.

**SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.**

After the very misty glimpse of the early road, the subject is cloaked in darkness until the 17th century, and when visibility becomes better we find a curious state of affairs. There has ceased to be a more or less direct road from Preston to Kirkham, except by going for about two miles over a road which was the private property of two families, and for which a toll was levied; a state of affairs which lasted, *mirabile dictu*, until 1902. In other words the road from the Plough Inn at Ashton to the Savock belonged to the Hoghtons, and thence westward through Clifton village to Scales was the property of the Clifton family. The ‘king’s highway’ ran from Ashton down what was called Sidgreaves Lane (now Lea Road), for about a mile, then turned west through Lea into Deepdale Lane and westward past Clifton windmill and Lund church to Scales, leaving the village of Clifton to the south.

It will be convenient for the moment to deal with certain sections of the road at a time.

In October 1618 the Westby Court Leet\(^3\) ordered “that all the tenantes in Lytle Plumpton that lay their worthing in the highway, that they make the way lawfull that men may travell thereby without trouble or lett.” One feels that the phrase ‘men may travell thereby’ refers to rather more than the local traffic, and this view is supported by an agreement made at the same Court in July, 1619:

> “Memorandum that it is this day fully agreed betwixt the Inhabitants of Little Plumpton and the Inhabitants of Little Marton, by and with the consent of the Right Worshipful Sir Cuthbert Clifton of Lytham, knight, and the steward of the Right Honourable the Countesse Dowager of Darbie of her lands here in the Fyld, concerning the use and passage through the mosse way and loane leading from Little Marton Mosse to Plumpton and soe to Kirkhame, as foloweth

First wheras ther bee twoo bridges for Carriages, the one adioyninge to Little Marton Mosse, the other in the lane nearer Little Plumpton, both

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\(^1\) Trans. Ill, pp. 3 and 57.

\(^2\) County Record Office, DRB.

\(^3\) County Record Office, DDC1. 1141.
which are to be used so oft as the Inhabitants shall passe betwixt their houses unto Kirkhame, Preston, or that way, with Cattell or Carriages. And forasmuch as the said Inhabitants have latly upon their owne proper costs and charges repayred and maid the said bridge next adjoyning to the mosse very passable, sound and sufficient for use with horses, cattell and carriages.

It is ththerefore hereby agreed that all the Inhabitants of Litle Marton shall and may from hencforth at all tyme and tymes hereafter freely and quietly passe and repasse on foot and on horsbacke, with cattell of all sorts, and with waines, carts, draughts and all manner of carriages whatsoever so oft as they or any of them shall have occasion to use that way without any manner of stop, let or disturbance of any Inhabitants of the townshipe of Little Plumpton, or any of them in any wise.

In consideration wherof the Inhabitants of Little Marton shall for ever make, reparer, and keep sufficient (upon their owne cost and charges) the said bridge which they have already maid, together with seaven yards and a halfe at eyther end of the same. And the Inhabitants of Little Plumpton shall likewise for ever well and sufficiently make, mantayne, and keepe the other bridge and the rest of the whole lane fitt and passable for all carriages upon their owne proper cost and charges.

Provided alwaies that if any defect happen to be in eyther of the said bridges, or the lane, or those twoo roodes which Marton men ought to maintayne, and upon the view of twoo of the lords Jury of Marton and twoo of the lords Jury of Little Plumpton and eyther of them a byloman, the same be found insufficient, and the Inhabitants of Little Marton or Little Plumpton be therupon to reparer the decay then the parties therein faulty do it sufficiently and speedily as oft as need shall require.

And likewise it is agreed that for the amending of those twoo roodes at the ends of that bridge which Little Marton men are to reparer, they shall have libertie at all tymes to take clay within Little Plumpton Lane for the doing therof, so oft as need shall require. Vera copia, 1648."

This matter was continued yet further at the Westby Courts held in May, 1651, December, 1651, October, 1655, and October,1680:

"The carr way betweene Much Marton and Little Plumpton being urged to be maid passable at all tymes by the townshipe of Westby, upon the motion of Mr. William Walker, attorney, to the Sessions of Peace houlden at Preston, the court then was pleased to order the parishes of Kirkhame, Poulton, and Bisbame to contribuit towards the amending of it the some of xxxII, and then it should be ever after maintayned by the Inhabitants of Little Plumpton, a copie of which Order is here set downe for memorie sake to posteritie as foloweth:

1648 Ad Sessionem pacis tenet apud Preston in Amoundernes in Com. Lancast. die Jovis, vidz. tertio die Julii Anno Regni Regis Domini Caroli etc. vicensimo quarto. [3 July 1648]

Forasmuch as it appeareth to this Court that of late tyme the
Commons and mosse grounds lying and being within Plumpton and
Marton that were formerly specious and large have beene improved by
reason whereof the highwaies leading from Marton and other places
there adjoyninge therunto and towards the Markett towne of Preston
and other places and townes of commerce, weare straitned, and now by
reason of the unseasonable tymes for divers yeares last past the said
waies being Mossie Grounds are soe wore out and decayed that the
people interested of right cannot passe the same waies to the said
towne of Preston and other places as they ought without extreme
danger and hazard of their lives and goods, and the Inhabitants of
the said towne of Plumpton are altogether unable to repayre and
amend the same way therin being very longe and the Improvers
th erof pore people. Therefore this court, taking the same into
consideration and knowing that some course ought in right to be
taken for the speedie amendment of the same, doth order and intreat
Theophilus Leigh, gentleman, William Pateson and William Townend,
gentlemen, would be pleased to appoint some convenient tyme within
this fortnight, and to take an exact vew of the same waies and the
defects and nessessitie therof, and to consider both in what manner
the same may be maid passable and put in good repaire, and what
charg they may conceive will be requisit for the speedie and sufficient
repaire therof, which this Court doth require them to certifie under
their hands in writing unto Christopher Banister, esquire, or some
other of the next Justices of the Peace, to the end the same certificat
may be approved of and by him under his hand confirmed. And
it is further ordered that what charg may soe appear to be nessessarily
dispended in the repaire therof, shalbe proportionably taxed and
forthwith paid and borne by the parishes of Kirkhame, Poulton, and
Bisbame, being the next parishes adjoyning to the same, and likely
to have the most use and benefite therby as addicional helpes to them
therein, and to be payed over unto the said William Pateson and
William Townend, who are likewise required to deliver over the same
unto the present supervisors of the waies within Plumpton appointed
for this present yeare, who are commanded to take special care for
the prefect amendment therof according to the advice and direction of
the said William Patson and William Townend. And further it is
ordered by this court that the same waies being soo sufficiently amended
shalbe therafter maintayned and uphoulden in good repaire by the
Inhabitants of Plumpton onlie soo fare as doe lye within their owne
towne upon ther owne charges without further burthen or charg to
the said parishes or any of them, and in case any remisnes or oposicion
to this Court be made or found, that then the same shalbe made
knowne to this Court at the next Sessions here to be houlden by whom
the same is so obstructed that the same parties may be proceeded
against according to the Law, and punished according to their demerits
in hindering soo good and nessessary a worke."
10 Dec., 1651.
"The Calsy in Little Plumpton Care Lane that goes betwixt it and Little Marton being maid of the Country charge according to the order of the Sessions of Peace, a coppie wherof is before incerted in this booke, by which order the Inhabitants of Little Plumpton are to maintayne the said Calsy upon ther owne cost ever hereafter, which Inhabitants were pleased to reffer themselves to the sensure of their Worshipfull Maister Mr. Thomas Clifton what hee would set downe under his hand that every of them should maintayne of the said Calsy, which was done by him as foloweth:

According to this order this way and Calsy was devided amongst these men by lott beginning at the west end of it the xxviiith day of May Anno 1652 by Thomas Robinsonn of Westby, every mans part folowing as his lot came out.

1. Brewers House 3 roods.
2. Robert Wildings 12 roodes.
3. Thomas Burskoe 2 roods.
   John Lasles
5. James Wilding 10 roodes.
6. Thomas Merser 1 rood and halfe.
7. Nicholas Newsame 10 roodes.
8. Cuthbert Ryley 8 roodes.
10. Thomas Southworth 9 rood.
13. Thomas Clitheral 10 roods.
   Raph Swan

and ended about 4 rood upon the east of the nearer Bridge."

22 Oct., 1655.
"The new calsy in Plumpton Car Loan is in danger to be broken forth and spoyled for want of sufficient earth at the sids of it, and carts and cariages going upon it, ther being nothing to keep them of, we order that the severall persons to whome it belongs to maintayne and who know ther partes therof, that they both maintaine their parts at the sides with earth, and eyther set stoupes of wood at every division, or make great Hobes of earth to keep carts and cariages of it, and make even and fill up all the holes in the loane at the sid of their partes before the 24 of June next in forfet of who defaults therin iiij iiiijd."

12 Oct., 1680.
"Wee alsoe further order that all the Inhabitants of Great Plumpton
and Litle Plumpton shall repaire and mantaine the Causey betwixt the Nearer Carr Bridge in Litle Plumpton Carr Lane to Tarnbrick Crosse.

Wee alsoe order that Litle Plumpton tenants shall repaire theire several parts of the Cawsey on Litle Plumpton Carr Lane betwist Martin Carr Cawsey and the aforesaid Nearer Carr Bridge in Litle Plumpton Carr Lane according to theire former Division."

Meanwhile, further to the west, the inhabitants of Great and Little Marton had in October, 1655, petitioned1 Quarter Sessions for permission to build a bridge over the outlet from Marton Mere to the sea, as they had been "many tyme in the winter debarrd from the benefitt of the Marquett at Preston, at the most beneficiall and usuall tyme of commerce" owing to the way being "in the winter soe soft by reason of the slitch and water that it is not passable but with great danger of losse or spoilinge theire goods."

During the 18th century there would probably be little happening to the lanes westward of Kirkham, beyond a succession of repairs which would need to be more and more frequent as the fame of the bathing-place on the coast was bruited abroad. In 1754, Bishop Pococke tells us that "at Blackpool, near the sea, are accommodations for people who come to bathe;"2 while in August, 1780, Sir William Farington records in his account-book that he spent five guineas on his Blackpool journey.3 About three years later coaches began to run from Manchester to the growing resort, and from that time forward the amount of traffic gradually increased.

Let us now leave for a while the road west of Kirkham, and consider what happened to the road to that place from Preston. As has been stated, the King's highway wandered round the back of Lea and Clifton. But there are several hints that people, during the 17th century, had commenced to make their way by a more southerly and direct route over Lea Marsh, albeit they paid a toll to the lord of the manor. In the Hoghton rental of 1648 is an item, "Passage money over the Marsh, £4"; in 1660 "Passage money at the Stakes £3 10s."; while the growth of traffic is indicated by "a toll for Passage over Lea Marsh sett for

1 C.R.O. QSP. 122/8.
3 C.R.O. DDF. 35.
£24” in the accounts for 1720. The significance of this last entry will appear later.

That a similar toll was charged on the Clifton section of the marsh-way, west of Savock, is shown by the presentation at Clifton manor court in 1678 of “John Brown and John Hornby for not paying passage money according to custom.”

The origin of the Lea toll is explained, with other matters in the following document:

"Articles of Agreement made . . . the Twenty fourth day of December . . . 1718. Between Sir Henry Hoghton of Hoghton . . . Barronet on the one part, and William Campbell of Ashton-super-Ribble . . . yeoman on the other part as followeth:—

Whereas divers and several persons within Brittain, but especially the Inhabitants of the Fild Country and of several Towns, Townships, and Hamlets lying and being in the Hundred of Amounderness . . . having Ordinary and frequent Occasion to travel and go from their respective Habitations to the Town of Preston on Horseback or on foot with Teams, Carts, and Carriages and Cattle of all Sorts have heretofore by and with the Leave, Licence, and permission of Sir Richard Hoghton Bart., decd. Grandfather to the said Sir Henry Hoghton and other the Ancestors of . . . Sir Henry Hoghton passed and repassed by, through, and over certain lands in Lea . . . now the inheritance of . . . Sir Henry Hoghton herein hereafter particularly mentioned, and to pay for the same at certain times in the Year when . . . Sir Richard Hoghton or his Ancestors pleased to call for the same certain Small Sums of money by way of Acknowledgment of such Courtesy and Favour of passing and repassing as aforesaid.

And . . . as . . . Sir Richard Hoghton in his life time did Appoint . . . sundry Persons to Obstruct and Stop the said passage by reason of the Misdemeanours of several persons in their passing and repassing . . . and for the prevention of such Prejudice, Detriment, and Damage as did accrue unto . . . Sir Richard Hoghton as also the further Inconvenience that was likely to arise thereby . . . Sir Richard Hoghton at the Importunity and Request of several of the Inhabitants aforesaid made to Thomas Campbell decd. Father of . . . William Campbell, party to these presents, for the procuring the permission of passing and repassing . . . in and by certain Articles of Agreement bearing date the Six and twentieth Day of April . . . 1676 made between . . . Sir Richard Hoghton . . . and . . . Thomas Campbell . . . did give . . . full Power and Authority to . . . Thomas Campbell . . . to Ask, demand, receive, and take certain Pensions, Payments, and Sums of Money Specified and

1 C.R.O. DDC1. 1141.
2 C.R.O. DDC1. 580.
3 Died 3 Feb. 1677/8.
expressed in the said Articles and which are also hereinafter... particularly expressed... from all and every person and persons (except such as... were and are now excepted) passing and repassing by, through, and over the aforesaid lands in Lea, now the inheritance of... Sir Henry Hoghton, and to make composition for and concerning the same at his and their Will and pleasure, and upon refusal or in default of Payment to prohibit... all and every person and persons except such as were therein and are also... by these presents excepted from passing and repassing...

Now therefore for the further preventing of all Prejudice... and Damages that... might hereafter happen... unto the said Sir Henry Hoghton... by reason of the said Liberty... of passing and repassing... and for and upon the Considerations hereafter mentioned... It is... agreed upon by... the said parties... in manner and form following:—

And First... Sir Henry Hoghton... doth agree to and with the said William Campbell... from time to time and at all times hereafter during the... life of... William Campbell, Charles Campbell, and John Campbell sons of the said William... from the first day of October last past... to demand... from all and every person and persons whatsoever (other than such... as are hereafter named and described...) passing and repassing... either on Horseback or with Cart or Carriage or driving any Cattle to pass... through certain Lands... of Sir Henry Hoghton called Lea Marsh lying in Lea aforesaid and in Ashton Super Ribble... leading from the said Town of Preston at a certain Place in Ashton called the Stakes, and Leads by and over the said Lea Marsh unto a certain Stone at Savock called the Blew Stone lying in Lea aforesaid, such and so much Money... at the several and respective Rates and Proportions... that is to say, For all and every person and persons passing and repassing as aforesaid on Horseback or with a Horse, Mare, or Gelding, One Penny, and after that Proportion for any more and every other Horse, Mare or Gelding, for every Cart or Carriage wherein shall be three Horses, Mares or Geldings three Pence, and if but two then two pence, For every Ox, Cow, or Beast of that Kind, and for every Swine one halfpenny, For every Twenty Sheep four pence, and for every pair of New Wheels without a Cart two pence, Otherwise that it shall and may be lawful... for... William Campbell... to take Compositions in Gross from any Person... passing and repassing as aforesaid... And that if any person... shall refuse to pay the respective Rates... it shall be lawful for William Campbell... to hinder by all legal means every such person... or if any person... shall pass or repass... by Lea Hall or through Greaves Town to avoid and Escape any of the several payments hereinbefore expressed, that then it... may be lawful for the said William Campbell... to cause such Person... to pay any Sum or Sums of Money not exceeding the Sum of Five Shillings for one offence, unless the Law determine it otherwise.
And Further the said Sir Henry Hoghton... doth Covenant... with the said William Campbell... that he the said William... shall have... all that Housing and Outhouseing... commonly called the Stakes, and also all that one Acre of Ground... called the Meadow adjoining to the said house late in the possession of Thomas Campbell... decd...

And the said William Campbell... doth hereby Covenant... with the said Sir Henry Hoghton... that he... shall... pay... to the said Sir Henry Hoghton... the Annual Rent of Twenty four Pounds...

And the said Sir Henry Hoghton... doth Covenant... that he the said William Campbell... shall and may take... all such Anchorage or Benefit... for lading or unlading of any Vessell, Bark, or Boats in the Water of Rible or that shall lye or stay on any of the Lands of the said Sir Henry Hoghton... and that... William Campbell... shall have... for every Millstone that shall be laid on the Shore... adjoining to the River of Rible in Lea and Ashton... Six pence... except such Millstones as the said Sir Henry Hoghton... shall have... and... also that it shall and may be lawful to and for the said William Campbell... to keep and use a Boat for the Ferrying... of persons from time to time... over the River of Savock and to take the Benefit and Privilege therof...

Provided always... that the said Sir Henry Hoghton... his family, servants, and agents, and all other persons that shall have any Occasion or Business with the said Sir Henry at Lea Hall, John Buller and his family, Ann Short and her family, Thomas Clifton, esq., of Lytham and his family, Servants, and Agents only during the Pleasure of the said Sir Henry Hoghton... are hereby declared Exempted...

But if it happen that the said Thomas Clifton... shall permit or suffer the Bridge lying over Savock between Lea Marsh and Clifton Marsh to be pulled up or... shall by any other means obstruct... the aforesaid way... that then the said Sir Henry Hoghton... doth give unto the said William Campbell... full and absolute Power... to take... from the said Thomas Clifton and from all and every of his family, servants, and Agents, that pass and repass... such Sums of money as hereinbefore specified...

And further that... William Campbell... shall have all the Wreck under the Value of one Shilling which shall happen to be found upon... Lea Marsh between the aforesaid house of William Campbell and the East Nook of the Horse Coppy adjoining to the said Marsh, and so in a direct line to the River of Ribble (Except all such Wreck as will be Piles for calls)... 

if the said Thomas Clifton... shall stop... the aforesaid way or Passage at Savock entering upon Lea Marsh... so the said William Campbell... cannot receive such Sum... as is hereinbefore expressed, that then every such sum... which would become due to
Sir Henry Hoghton . . . shall cease . . . during Stoppage . . . except Ten shillings per annum for the aforesaid House . . . and Twenty Shillings per annum for the aforesaid Close of Ground . . .”

Twenty years earlier, 21 March, 1698/9, Thomas Clifton had leased to the same William Campbell, then described as of Lytham, sailor, the toll of Clifton Marsh, in these terms:¹

“For and in consideration of the Annual rent . . . hereafter expressed . . . all the right and power of laying open and stopping the Ways and Passages over that Marsh in Clifton aforesaid which belongs to the said Thomas Clifton (the liberty and power to him the said Thomas Clifton for himself, his Family and Household Servants, Tenants and others when in Person with him or in or upon his Service with Horses or Mares, Loads, Coaches, Carts or Carriages, Goods and Chattels at all times to pass and repass over the said Marsh . . . hereby excepted). To have and to hold the said Right and Power . . . unto him the said William Campbell . . . during the term of 99 years if Thomas Campbell of Ashton-super-Ribble . . . , father of him the said William, the said William Campbell or John Campbell his natural brother . . . and the said Thomas Clifton . . . fortune so long to live. Yielding and paying therefore yearly . . . the annual Rent of Four Pounds. And further also that the said William Campbell . . . shall . . . procure . . . unto him the said Thomas Clifton . . . a free way and passage over that Marsh called Lea Marsh . . . and so on the way to Preston . . . without . . . hindrance from Sir Charles Hoghton . . .

And if it shall happen at any Time during the said Term . . . that . . . Thomas Clifton . . . shall be stopped or hindered from passing and repassing over either of those two Marshes called Newton Marsh and Freckleton Marsh . . . or . . . be forced or made to pay for the same, that then . . . William Campbell . . . shall not Permit or Suffer any of the Inhabitants in Newton or Freckleton . . . to pass or repass . . . over the said Clifton Marsh till restitution be made . . .

And the said Thomas Clifton . . . doth agree . . . that if it shall happen at any Time during the said Term by Means of any Warrs or Tumults the Benefit . . . of Stopping or laying open the . . . passages over the said Clifton and Lea Marshes . . . be obstructed and hindered that then . . . a proportionate part of the Rent . . . shall . . . be abated . . .”

It seems probable, as William Campbell is described as of Lytham and his father as of Ashton, that the father had at that time charge of the Lea road. This Clifton Marsh lease was surrendered on 16 December, 1719, and a new one issued to

C.R.O. DDCl. 580a.
William Campbell for the term of 99 years or the lives of himself, Margaret his daughter and Thomas Clifton. The father was buried on 2 May, 1714, and William is now described—as in the Lea lease previously quoted—as being of Ashton-on-Ribble. The rent remained £4 a year, but the value of the tolls is strongly indicated by the sum of £400 which was charged for the new lease.

The Hoghtons’ way through Lea, which they had so long allowed to be a short cut from Preston to Kirkham, was not the road which we know to-day. Until 1781 the road ran over Lea Marsh, that is, more or less along the river bank, south of the old and new Lea Halls and joining the line of the present road opposite the Lea Gate Hotel. The track can still be seen just to the south-east of the bridge over the Savock.

Towards the end of the 18th century the need for a new road became urgent. The King’s highway was “very ruinous, in bad repair, and of an unnecessary length”, while the private way over Lea and Clifton marshes was “frequently overflowed by the Tides . . . and sometimes impassable”; so Thomas Clifton and Sir Henry Hoghton made a new road at their own expense, more or less on the line of the present road. The story is well told by the following agreement, it being borne in mind that traffic was increasing with the growing popularity of Blackpool:

Articles of Agreement . . . between Sir Henry Hoghton of Walton . . . Baronet . . . and Thomas Clifton of Lytham, . . . esquire . . . the First Day of May . . . 1781.

Whereas the Kings Highway leading from the Market Town of Preston to the Market Town of Kirkham . . . for a long time past hath been and now is very ruinous, in bad repair, and of an unnecessary length, and cannot for want of proper Materials and other reasons be made and kept in proper Condition, and whereas the said Sir Henry Hoghton is seized in Fee Simple . . . of the Manor or Lordship of Lea . . . and also of a Marsh . . . called Lea Marsh, and the said Thomas Clifton is likewise seized . . . of the Manor or Lordship of Clifton with Salwick . . . and also of a Marsh . . . called Clifton Marsh . . . and whereas . . . Sir Henry Hoghton and Thomas Clifton have for some time permitted the King’s Subjects with Horses, Carts, and Carriages to travel through and over the same Marshes on their paying a Toll, by which means a great Length of Road was avoided by such travellers, But forasmuch as the

1 C.R.O. DDC1. 581.  
2 C.R.O. DDC1. 583.
The Highway from Preston into the Fylde.

Road over the said Marshes is frequently overflowed by the Tides, which causes the same to be very often exceedingly Dirty, in Bad repair, and sometimes impassable, the said Sir Henry Hoghton and Thomas Clifton with the wishes of the Inhabitants near and persons usually travelling on the said Road mutually entered into an Agreement to make a new and more convenient Road over their said Estates which they have accordingly done in manner hereinafter mentioned, that is to say, the said Thomas Clifton as his Share at his own expence made a Road which begins at the East End of a certain village called Scales, where the Townships of Clifton with Salwick and Newton with Scales divide, and extends through Clifton to the River Salwick otherwise Savick and containing in Length two Miles, eighteen Poles, and four Yards which Road in every part thereof is well and effectually paved with Stones to the Width of twelve Feet at least. And the said Sir Henry Hoghton as his Share hath at his own expence made a Road which begins at the East Edge or Side of the said River Savick and extends through the Lands of the said Sir Henry Hoghton called Lea Demesne in a direct Line to or near the back of Old Lea Hall and so on to a place at the Eastern Extremity of Lea Demesne called the Two Gates and from thence to a certain place in Ashton called Five Lane Ends containing in Length one Mile four Furlongs twelve Poles and four Yards which Road is paved with Stones to the width of twelve Feet at the least well and effectually except a small part thereof lying between the Two Gates and Five Lane Ends which the said Sir Henry Hoghton undertakes effectually to pave as soon as the Season will permit and Thomas Clifton shall Request.

And whereas the said Sir Henry Hoghton and Thomas Clifton have at their joint and equal expence built a Bridge over the said River Savick and erected a dwelling-house with proper outhouses for the Habitation of a person or persons who is or are or maybe hereafter appointed to collect the Tolls to be demanded for travelling on the aforesaid Roads and the Wharfage Money to be paid for the use of certain Wharfs and places which the said Sir Henry Hoghton and Thomas Clifton have agreed to make for the Convenience of Persons loading and unloading Goods on the Banks of the River Savick and the River Ribble

And whereas the said Sir Henry Hoghton and Thomas Clifton have agreed to throw into Common certain Quantities of Land on each side the said River Savick to be appropriated for the making of Wharfe, Timber and Coal Yards and in order that the precise Extent of such Land may be ascertained the same is now separated and staked out, and is also delineated in the Plan hereto annexed. Now these Presents Witness that the Road over the said Marshes heretofore usually travelled on with the permission of Sir Henry Hoghton and Thomas Clifton shall from the date hereof be stopped and shut up and no person after that time allowed publickly to travel or go over E
the same without the mutual consent... of... Sir Henry Hoghton and Thomas Clifton... (except as is hereinafter excepted...)

And the said Sir Henry Hoghton doth hereby... agree with the said Thomas Clifton... that during the Term of Ninety-nine years... he... will so far dedicate and give up so much of his Land as shall be taken up by the said Road, Wharf, Yards, Tollhouse... for the joint and equal benefit of the parties, that neither he... nor his... agents or workmen... will hinder... his Majesty's Liege Subjects... from passing and repassing... over the same Road.

[Thomas Clifton agrees likewise].

And it is hereby mutually agreed... that the money... that shall arise from the... Tolls shall be... applied (as follows) that so much thereof as shall be deemed necessary to keep in good repair the said Bridge, Tollhouse, Tollgate and Wharfs and the Rails, Gates, and Fences... shall be applied for that purpose and then the yearly sum of Fifteen Pounds shall be paid to... Sir Henry Hoghton and the remainder shall be paid to... Sir Henry Hoghton and Thomas Clifton share and share alike... and the Accounts... shall be settled... yearly... on the First day of May...

And whereas there is a considerable part of the King's Highway which goes through the Township of Preston and Hamlet of Ashton and leads to that part of the Road that has been made by the said Sir Henry Hoghton... which is repaired by the said Townships of Preston and Ashton, and there is also a considerable part of the King's Highway which begins at the West End of that part of the Road that has been made by the said Thomas Clifton... and runs through the Townships of Newton with Scales and Kirkham so that the aforesaid newmade Road lies between the aforesaid King's Highways.

And whereas the said newmade Road will be of little or no Service unless the aforesaid King's Highways are constantly kept in good repair... Now it is hereby further mutually... agreed upon... by the said parties... and the said Sir Henry Hoghton... doth hereby agree... that he... will... by Indictment or other Legal means when necessary... cause... that part of the aforesaid King's Highway which begins at the Town of Preston and runs through the Hamlet of Ashton... constantly kept in good travelling repair.

[Thomas Clifton likewise for the road from Kirkham].

... And it is hereby also mutually agreed... that... before the first day of May 1782 the said Tollhouse and the Tolls to arise... shall be letten to Farm by Publick Auction for... three years...

And likewise that so much of the Land as extends South on each side of the... River Savick from the said intended Bridge to the River Ribble as is... delineated in the said Plan, and also so much of the Close of Land called the Lee marked A in the said Plan lying on the South side of the said Road, and also so much of the said Field called the Lee as lies on the North side of the said Road as is called the Garden...
marked B., and also that part of Lea Marsh and the Hills lying on the North Side of the Road marked C, and also that part of Lea Marsh and the Hills, lying on the South side of the said New Road marked D, and also so much of the Land of the said Thomas Clifton as is called the Meadow Piece marked E, and also that part of Clifton Marsh lying on the North side of the Road marked F, and also that other part of Clifton Marsh lying on the South side of the New Road marked G, and likewise that part of Clifton Marsh lying in the inside of the Cop marked H . . . shall be holden for the purpose of Wharfages, landing Coals, Limestones or other Stone, Slate, Timber, and other Goods . . . and that a Wharf or . . . Wharfs . . . shall be made . . . at the joint and equal expence of the said Parties . . . on one or both sides of the said River Salwick as they shall think proper . . . which . . . shall be let . . . with the said Tolls and Tollhouse . . . or separately . . .

Provided further that if the Road leading over Newton and Freckleton Marshes . . . which is now used shall at any time during the said Term . . . be stopped . . . or the Tolls now taken there shall be increased . . . that then . . . Thomas Clifton . . . shall have full power . . . to prevent . . . all . . . of the Landowners . . . and Inhabitants of the said Townships of Newton with Scales and Freckleton . . . from passing through the said Toll Bar to be erected . . .

Provided further . . . that the said Sir Henry Hoghton, his family, agents, and servants and . . . the tenants . . . of Lea Demesne . . . and also Thomas Clifton and all his family, servants, and agents . . . shall . . . pass through the said Toll Bar . . . without paying any Toll . . .

NINETEENTH CENTURY.

This new road had been in use for only a generation when it became the subject of adverse criticism as the following abstracts from letters in the local papers show:

"... But there is a road leading from . . . Kirkham, than which I do not know a worse, or a more dangerous, even at noon day, and when the most careful drivers have to pass each other. This arises from the narrowness of the paved part of it, where two carts can only just pass without touching; and from the waste at the sides being in many parts so much lower, as to render it impossible for any kind of carriage (without a certainty of being overturned) to leave the pavement . . . This is its worst property . . . but it has another . . . I mean its indirectness; for instance, the great angles at the top of Tulketh-brow, and at Clifton . . ."

Pro Bono Publico

"... I will endeavour to point out the road to Preston, which the

1 Preston Chronicle, 9 Oct., 1824.
The Highway from Preston into the Fylde.

public have a right to use without paying any toll, and having so done, I shall leave it to themselves to see that they have justice done them. About two miles from Kirkham, a paved road turns off on the left hand—pursue this for 200 or 300 yards—take the first turn to the right—pass along a sandy lane by Lund Chapel—the windmill—Debdale wood—Lea Roman Catholic Chapel, etc., and through a green lane, enter the present road again near Lea Hall . . .”

Metropolitanus.1

“From positive enquiries I believe I am not misleading your readers when I assert that the sense of the Fylde is in favour of a new road between Kirkham and Preston. I can go further, and say that if any respectable individual will call a public meeting at Kirkham, of landowners, or others interested, that the measure will meet with cordial support. Directions . . . have been given to the Surveyor for . . . Kirkham to put some part of the original Kirkham road into proper repair, with a recommendation for other contiguous townships to follow the example . . . By absurd trifling is this highly useful undertaking permitted to slumber, and the present zigzag, dangerous road submitted to, although the public are mulcted at a turnpike for such absurd accommodation.”

Viator.2

“It has been a matter of very general surprise . . . that the miserable road between Kirkham and Preston has been suffered so long to remain in its present round-about course . . . More than a mile might be saved in a distance of less than nine miles, and the value of the Fylde property much raised, by a better and more direct communication. The present road is one merely of sufferance, and the traveller is perpetually in danger of being soused in a ditch, and the ditches between Clifton turnpike and the village are very capacious and roomy. It would be satisfactory if the public knew the amount of Tolls collected, with the appropriation thereof . . . ”

B.3

But as is so often the case, many long years were to pass before reform was effected. All through the 19th century the Clifton and Lea toll-road persisted. Unfortunately no accounts of the takings at the toll-bar have survived, although there is an entry dated 1 Feb., 1786, in an account-book4 which states that there was received “in bad brass £5 17s. 8d., and in bad silver 13d.” From the same account book it is learnt that during the years 1785 to 1791 inclusive, the income of the land-

1 Ibid, 1 Dec., 1824.
3 Preston Pilot, 1 Jan., 1825.
4 C.R.O. DDHo, 11.
owners, mainly rent, was £626 19s. 2d., while during the same period the expenditure was £65 9s. 8½d., of which £11 12s. 7½d. was for repairs to the road. On 14 August, 1840, the then keeper of the Lea Gate informed the steward of the Clifton estate that owing to the falling off of receipts since the opening of the Preston and Wyre Railway\(^1\), he would not be able to maintain the present rent.\(^2\)

Some interesting figures for repair work on the Clifton section can be shown for the years 1875 to 1879 inclusive\(^3\):

```
Cost of Keeping the Road through Clifton to Newton in Repair for this last Five Years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Team Labour</th>
<th>Manual Labour</th>
<th>Pavers' Work by the Day making new footpath</th>
<th>Paving</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>39 1 3</td>
<td>6 11 4</td>
<td>16 10 0</td>
<td>39 1 5</td>
<td>101 4 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>14 11 10 1</td>
<td>10 4 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24 16 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1877</td>
<td>41 15 10</td>
<td>13 18 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>94 5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>4 7 10</td>
<td>6 13 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11 0 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1879</td>
<td>13 15 9</td>
<td>6 13 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45 8 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

£276 14 7

Cost to Keep the Road in Good Repair from Savick Pool to Newton per year.

£ s. d.

Pavers' Work ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 15 0 0
Carting Sand and Stones to Pavers ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 7 10 0
```

\(^1\) 25 July, 1840.
\(^2\) C.R.O. DDC1. 1188/23.
\(^3\) C.R.O. DDC1. 585.
The Highway from Preston into the Fylde.

7 tons of paving Stones @ 6/- per Ton .... 2 2 0
12 tons of Broken Stones and Carting to each end of Clifton Village @ 9/3 per Ton .... 5 11 0
20 tons of Gravel Landed at Savick pool and Carting on the Road @ 4/4 per Ton .... 4 6 8
10 tons of Cinders Carted from Preston @ 3/6 per Ton .... 1 15 0
To 1 Man 1 Horse Carting Weed and Cowings off the Road-sides 4 days @ 7/- per Day .... 1 8 0
Manual Labour .... 6 0 0

Nov. 19th, 1879. £43 12 8

An item of expense which has been preserved is a charge of £775 13s. 0d. " incurred by pulling down, rebuilding, erecting additional buildings, improving and repairing dwelling house and Public House and out-buildings at Clifton and Lea Toll Barr," an event which took place in 1833. A licence had been granted in 1795.

Also we have a "List of Charges of Tolls at Lea Gate and Newton Tollbars, occupied by Messrs. Joseph Kelsall and George Taylor" in 1888:

"List of Charges of Tolls at Lea Gate and Newton Tollbars, occupied by Messrs. Joseph Kelsall and George Taylor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lea Gate</th>
<th>Newton Gate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carriage with 4 Horses</td>
<td>1/-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; 3 &quot;</td>
<td>9d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; 2 &quot;</td>
<td>6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; 1 &quot;</td>
<td>4½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drag or Shandray, 1 Horse</td>
<td>3d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Cart 1 &quot;</td>
<td>3d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tandam, 1 &quot;</td>
<td>5d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saddle Horse or Mule</td>
<td>1d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage drawn by Mule or Donkey</td>
<td>3d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cart with Narrow Wheels, 1 Horse</td>
<td>2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; 2 &quot;</td>
<td>4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; Broad 1 &quot;</td>
<td>2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; 2 &quot;</td>
<td>4½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagon with Narrow Wheels, 1 Horse</td>
<td>6d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 C.R.O. DDCI. 583b.
2 C.R.O. DDCI. 588.
Wagon rises five pence per Horse at Newton
" ... three " " " " Lea Gate. ..... 4½d. 4d.
" ... with Broad Wheels, 1 Horse ..... 6d. 8d.
" ... 2 " " " " ..... 9d. 1/-
" ... 3 " " " " ..... 4½d. 3d.
Hearse with 1 Horse ..... 6d. 6d.
" ... 2 " " " " ..... 1/-
" ... Corpse 1/- extra at each place.
Cow or Calf each ..... 1d. 1d.
Sheep or Pigs ..... 4½d. 4½d.
Bicycle ..... 1d. 1d.
Tricycle ..... 2d. 2d.

R. Whittaker, Salwick, Dec. 14th, 1888.

Meanwhile the agreement for 99 years made in 1791 had run out, but had been extended for 7 years from 1 May, 1880, the provision being made that if more than £196 a year was collected by Edward Taylor, Sir Charles de Hoghton was to pay £60 a year out of the tolls.¹

THE MODERN ROAD.

We come now to what may fairly be called the modern period. In 1889 the newly formed Lancashire County Council took over the administrative duties of the Justices of the Peace, and the supervision of the county’s roads was given to the Main Roads and Bridges Committee. Soon a numbering of secondary roads took place, and we find that the old King’s highway from Preston, by way of Ashton Four Lane Ends, Lea Road railway station, Lea Lodge, the Saddle Inn, Deepdale Lane, Chapel Lane and Scales to Kirkham was classed as Road No. 12. The road through Kirkham was of course the affair of the Local Board of Health, while from Ribby Hall to Raikes Hall was road No. 13, 7 miles 4 furlongs 7 yards long. Road No. 14 ran from Preston by way of Ashton Lane, Lea Road, and over “the now Private Road repairable by Mr. Clifton and Sir H. de Hoghton,” through Clifton to Scales, thence through Kirkham to Ribby Hall, Wrea Green, Brown Moss Side Station, Shell Hill House, Lytham, Heyhouses, St. Annes, to Blackpool, a distance of 16 miles and 107 yards.

¹ C.R.O. DDCI. 586.
Preston to Blackpool since 1890 is to show pertinent extracts from the Proceedings of the Lancashire County Council, with expansion and explanation where necessary. The Committee is of course the Main Roads and Bridges Committee.

1 Aug., 1895. "Your Committee regret to have to report that the scheme for raising this Secondary Road (No. 13) to the status of a Main Road has fallen through owing to the inability of the Local Authorities to raise the necessary funds for widening the road at a point known as 'The Straits' and that consequently valuable gifts of land and other concessions by adjacent landowners have been lost to the public."

The Straits was a particularly narrow portion of the easterly end of what is now Preston Old Road, Blackpool. A house at the place is still called "Strait's Cottage." This piece of road had exercised the attention of the Marton Ratepayers' Meeting, for in March, 1879, they had resolved "that the road known as 'The Straits' be widened as early as possible by the Township of Great Marton, Mr. Edward Kirkham agreeing to give his side of the road if the owner on the other side is agreeable likewise."

Apparently no success met the scheme, for fourteen years later, in March, 1893, we find that it was "resolved that the Surveyor be requested to communicate with the County Council as to the widening of the Highway known as the Straits between Great and Little Marton."

On 6 Aug., 1896, the Committee reported that the Fylde R.D.C. and the Corporation of Blackpool had come to an amicable arrangement to construct a new road 45 feet wide from New House Farm, through Marton, to Blackpool, in lieu of widening the present constricted road at Marton Straits, the Clifton Trustees and other landowners giving the necessary land.

Three years passed until on 4 May, 1899, the Committee stated that they had had under their consideration for the last 6 years the question of creating a Main Road between Preston and Blackpool, in substitution for the existing Secondary Roads, which had been found to be entirely inadequate for the ever-increasing traffic of the Fylde district. The length of the present route was 13 miles 3 furlongs 214 yards. Various schemes had been from time to time considered, the most feasible one being that of widening at Ashton Five Lane Ends and "Marton Straits" to
30 feet. Notwithstanding the generous co-operation of the landowners in offering to give the necessary land for such widenings, and to abolish the private toll-bar at Lea Gate, all the proposed schemes had fallen through, and in order to bring the protracted negotiations to a definite focus a meeting was held at the County Offices, 27 Mar., 1899, which was attended by the Mayor¹ and Town Clerk² of Blackpool, Mr. Thomas Fair as representing the Clifton Trustees, and Mr. Walter de Hoghton Birch as representing Sir James de Hoghton, Mr. Dixon, and the Chairman of the Main Roads and Bridges Committee³, when it was proposed that the “Marton Straits” scheme should be abandoned and an entirely new road, 45 feet wide, made from the bend at New House Farm to the Blackpool boundary near the Oxford Hotel; that the landowners should provide the necessary land and fencing and contribute £550 towards the cost; that the Corporation of Blackpool should construct a similar road from the boundary of the Borough to the Oxford Hotel, and relinquish all claim on the County Council for the future maintenance; and that the length of Secondary Road from New House Farm to Raikes Hall (towards which the County Council contributed £22 a year) should lapse.

The Fylde R.D.C. would have to make a new road, towards which they were prepared to spend £1,200; the landowners were willing to give the land, make the fencing, and contribute £550; and the County Council would provide for a grant of £550. When such new road was completed, necessary widening done at Ashton Five Lane Ends, and the tolls abolished, the County Council would adopt the entire route between Preston and Blackpool as a Main Road.

By 7 Aug., 1902, it could be stated that all the terms of the arrangement had been carried out. The new road from Marton Green to New House Farm had been made, the two lengths of private road at Five Lane Ends, Ashton, and Clifton-with-Salwick, had been legally constituted public highways, and on the 28 July the private Toll Bar at Lea Gate had been removed and abolished in the presence of a considerable concourse of

¹ Joseph Heap.
² Thomas Loftes.
³ W. W. B. Hulton, later Sir William Hulton, Bart.
people, and the entire route was now free, open, and public from end to end. The Committee recommended a Provisional Order declaring the highway to be a Main Road. Such Order was made, and confirmed on 6 Nov., 1902. Steps could now be taken to improve the road, and on 5 Feb., 1903, the Committee recommended that the offer of the Preston Rural District Council to reconstruct between Preston and Lea Gate be accepted, and also that application be made to the Local Government Board for leave to borrow money for the purpose. Three months later they said that the sanction to the raising a loan of £11,138 had been received. In order to carry out the widening the Trustees of the de Hoghton Estates promised to dedicate certain strips of land on each side of the road.

On 6 Aug., 1903, the Committee stated that they had recently been in negotiation with the Agent of the Clifton Estates for the grant of sufficient land to enable them to divert the Main Road between Four Lane Ends, near Clifton Grange Farm, and the village of Clifton, and that an arrangement had been arrived at whereby Mr. Talbot Clifton had agreed to grant an easement of the strip of land in question (1,208 yards) in consideration of the Fylde R.D.C. paying the value of two cottages which would have to be demolished. Mr. Clifton also agreed to grant two strips of land on the west side of Savick Bridge (129 and 261 square yards) similar to those already acquired from Sir James de Hoghton, for widening the road to 46 feet and rebuilding the Bridge.

The Marton Parish Council were doubtless very glad to have a well-made main road passing through their area, but in October, 1903, they rather plaintively " resolved that the attention of the Rural District Council be called to the disgraceful state of the roads in this Township. No one seems to have been working on the roads for months. They have been attending to the new main road altogether, and neglecting the Township roads, which are completely lost."

On 5 May, 1904, the Committee recommended that the work of reconstructing between Clifton and Marton to cost £10,769, be offered to the Fylde R.D.C. and the Kirkham U.D.C. in their respective districts.

At the March meeting of the County Council a resolution had been passed for leave to borrow £4,522 for the cost of rebuilding
in a widened form the Savick (Hundred) Bridge. It was now reported that tenders had been received, and that of J. Whittaker and Sons of Blackburn, for £3,661 19s. 9d., had been accepted.

On 4 Aug., 1904, a small grant of £5 for placing suitable inscriptions on the Dow and Peel (Hundred) Bridges, was approved.

At the October Quarter Sessions at Preston authority was obtained to make a considerable diversion of the road between Scales and Clifton village, whereby a complicated series of right-angled bends was to give place to a straight length of road. The site of the old road can still be seen at several places on the north side of the present road.

At the beginning of the following month the Committee recommended that a special grant of £200 be made to the Fylde R.D.C. for extra limestone macadam and rolling between Westby Catholic Church and the old Thatched Cottage, while in August, 1905, the tender of £378 2s. 9d. for reconstructing Peel Hill (Hundred) Bridge was accepted.

Two special grants were made in February, 1906—£100 to the Preston R.D.C. for sheeting with macadam a length opposite Ashton Bank, and £5 for supplying and fixing milestones and three boundary-stones, and for repairing the fingerposts.

Posts of another kind were required by the Marton Parish Council, for in September of the same year they "resolved that the District Council be requested to place several Posts on the main road from Blackpool to Kirkham, to caution drivers of vehicles and others at the several dangerous places on this road." In February, 1907, it was reported that negotiations had been in progress for some time with the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Co. with regard to the condition of the cobble-paved roadway over Whinbrick Railway Bridge at Westby. This length of roadway was the only one which had not been macadamized. The result was that the Railway Co. offered £71 17s. 6d. towards the reconstruction, upon condition that they were relieved from future maintenance. Just a year later an amount of £125 was passed for the reconstruction, while in August, 1907, it was stated that the total cost of reconstruction was £26,844.

We hear nothing further until 3 Feb., 1910, when Special
Grants of £198 for repairing were made. The whole of the sheeting and necessary repairs had been carried out, and the road was brought up to a satisfactory condition immediately before Blackpool Aviation Week. The motor car traffic during that week, however, did so much damage that the additional expenditure of £198 was absolutely necessary to restore it to a passable condition. There was pressure for further widening and in February, 1911, in connexion with the proposed improvement at various places between Kirkham and Marton, the Clerk of the Council was authorized to take all necessary steps to obtain Orders of Quarter Sessions for the diversion and stopping-up. The estimated cost of the work was £15,536, and the necessary authority was obtained at the October Quarter Sessions at Preston. One diversion consisted in the widening of Dow Bridge and its rebuilding slightly to the south of its original position, at the same time widening the road at that very awkward bend. Remains of the old bridge can still be seen to the north of the road.

Further westward, beyond Little Plumpton Hall, a double-right-angled bend was taken off, signs of the old track skirting a pit still showing to the south of the present road. Another wide sweep was removed between Peel railway-bridge and Little Marton windmill. This also can be seen to-day. And lastly an adjustment was made in the line of the road near Marton cemetery, so as to make an even joining with the new road from that point to the Oxford Hotel.

In May, 1911, it was recommended that the tender of W. Pollitt & Co. of Bolton to widen and improve Dow (Hundred) Bridge for £1,595, be accepted.

In connexion with the radical changes, Mr. W. Hodgson of the County Council (later Alderman Sir William Hodgson) explained to the Marton Parish Council in October, 1911, "how the expenditure on the Main Roads and Highways would steadily increase, owing to the great change in the nature of the traffic within recent years. The old macadam road was to give place to the tar macadam."

In February, 1912, it was reported that the work had been commenced. At Peel Four Lane Ends a new guard fence had been erected on the north side of the road, the road drained, and
the added width of the carriageway cindered and pitched. The length between Four Lane Ends and Under Hill Farm was now being coated with limestone. Between Under Hill Farm and New Farm, Westby, the carriageway had been completed and 700 yards of tar macadam laid. The diversion, widening, and improvement of the gradient near New Farm, Westby, was also in hand. The road had been lowered, carriageway cindered and pitched, and drainage and fencing practically completed. There were sixty men employed.

The report in May, 1912, was that the widening between Charnley's Farm and Peel Four Lane Ends had been completed, the hill near Charnley's Farm removed, the carriageway cindered and pitched and made ready for the limestone coat, and the draining between the Railway Bridge and Little Marton commenced. Fifty-seven men were employed.

At the beginning of August, 1912, it was said that on the length between Charnley's Farm and Peel Four Lane Ends an area of 2,600 square yards of limestone coating had been completed, 600 yards of kerbing laid on each side, gullies fixed, and footpaths finished off. The old road, with the exception of two short lengths, had been filled up and soiled, together with the dangerous dykes on each side from Peel Lane Ends to Peel Bridge. The laying of the coat of tar macadam near New Farm, Westby, together with the planting of quickthorn had been completed. Three hundred yards of kerbing had been laid, and half of the old road drained, filled up, and soiled.

Between the Railway Bridge and Little Marton the road through Wind Mill Brow had been lowered and pitched, and 400 yards of 6-inch drain laid. Considerable difficulty was experienced through contact with two beds of wet sand, and it had been necessary to lay 4-inch subsoil drains every 10 feet and to fill the trenches with ashes. Eighty-seven men were employed.

By November, 1912, with the exception of the laying of the tar macadam coat, the two lengths between Charnley's Farm and Peel Four Lane Ends, and near New Farm, Westby, were completed, and the old road filled up and soiled.

On the two improvements between the Railway Bridge and Little Marton, the whole of the road between the former point and the Windmill had been filled and the carriageway cindered
and pitched. Traffic had been diverted, a temporary road being made between the Windmill and Little Marton which would continue to be used during the raising of the old road. Fifty men were now employed.

On 6 February, 1913, the Committee reported that from the Railway Bridge towards Little Marton about 600 yards was ready for the tarmacadam coat, 1,200 yards of kerbs having been fixed. The remaining length to Little Marton was coated with limestone and the length from Little Marton towards Blackpool cindered and pitched, and the traffic diverted. A commencement had been made on the improvement near New House Farm, Marton. Sixty-four men were engaged.

Meanwhile another authority had become concerned with the road. In 1912 the Fylde Water Board had obtained an important Act which enabled them to make very large new reservoirs in the hills of the Forest of Bowland, and this scheme entailed the erection of a compensation reservoir at Westby, where the land reaches a height of over 100 feet. The site chosen was the point where the road to Blackpool took a turn to the left and where were the Clifton Arms Inn and several cottages—of the two windmills which had once stood there, the survivor was burned down about 1873. The Act provided that the necessary diversion should be paid for by the Fylde Water Board, and when completed should be handed over to the County Council. In practice the County Council did the work, and the Water Board paid. The work was commenced in April, 1913, and completed in July, 1915. To the east there is still a length between its original hedges, about twelve feet wide; while to the west its track can be seen winding down, through the Hell Hole, and up the hill towards the reservoir. To the east of the Weeton road a small length of the original road remains, with the Westby Catholic church by its side.

At the July Quarter Sessions at Preston, 1914, authority was obtained for the smoothing out of a difficult double bend at Ribby Corner, the old road having passed the barn which stands down below the level of the present road to the left as one approaches Kirkham.

The most radical changes in the line of the old road had now been completed, although much had yet to be done to produce
the broad highway which we know to-day. During the war years the Marton Parish Council continued to show an interest in the main road. In March, 1914, they had “resolved that the County Surveyor be communicated with in respect of the sides of the main road, whilst the roadway is perfect for the use of motors, the sides are impassable for pedestrians.” In July of the next year the same question arose, for they “resolved that the County Surveyor be asked to put the footpath on the Main Road in as good a state as the roadway. Because of the rough surface of the sidewalk pedestrians choose to use the roadway, which owing to the large amount of traffic at the present time is a dangerous practice. This Council considers that a footpath as good as the roadway is due to the pedestrian, and could be laid at little cost.” The motor was not yet the predominant vehicle, for in October, 1915, they “resolved that the County Surveyor be requested to sprinkle the Main Road with grit or sand at regular intervals, as the road is very slippery and a great danger to horses.”

New work on the road by the County Council began in 1920, for on 5 August the Committee asked for £1,300 to be voted to cover the cost of raising and widening at Newton-with-Scales, the land necessary having been given by Mr. Healey of Garstang.

On 1 November, 1923, an offer of Mr. James Lee of Ashton to sell for £1,200 his land and property at the junction of the Main Road with the road leading to Lea Road Station, to enable a desirable improvement to be carried out was reported. The property consisted of a workshop and a dwelling house.

There was also an offer from Mr. J. W. Law of Preston to purchase for £850 the house and land not required, and to demolish so much of the workshop as required, and to make good the gable.

Three months later it was stated that at the request of the Blackpool Corporation representatives of the Committee attended a conference of representatives of the Corporation, the Fylde Rural District Council, and the Ministry of Transport with regard to the suggested widening of the Main Road both within and outside the Borough boundary.

The scheme originated with the Town Planning of the Borough
and the areas immediately adjoining thereto. The representatives of the Corporation urged that, owing to the very heavy and increasing mechanically propelled traffic to and from the Borough the widening of this road to a minimum of 100 feet between Blackpool and Preston was a matter of urgency.

The conference was informed that the Committee had already realised the necessity for widening the existing Main Road and had given instructions for the land required for an even 60 feet road throughout to be scheduled for acquirement. This would provide a carriageway 40 feet in width, which would give double the present area for the greater portion of the length.

In addition, a new road across Freckleton Marsh and a widening of the remaining length to 60 feet to the Lytham boundary was in contemplation, and this it was expected would also considerably relieve the congestion of the summer traffic on the Preston-Blackpool Road.

The Committee's representatives stated that they were not prepared under these circumstances to recommend an increase of width to 100 feet, as requested by the Corporation. After further discussion and consideration the following resolution was passed by the conference:

That the conference agrees that the scheme suggested by the Main Roads and Bridges Committee of the County Council to widen the Blackpool and Preston Main Road to 60 feet throughout should be carried out with the shortest possible delay, and that the lands required to further widen the Main Road to 100 feet, between the Borough boundary and Clifton Arms Hotel at Little Marton, should be acquired at the same time by the Corporation, in conjunction with the Ministry of Transport, on the understanding that the construction of such further widening shall be carried out on such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon between the Authorities concerned when the occasion to further widen may arise.

It was understood the Blackpool Corporation would put in hand a widening to 60 feet, with provision for extension to 100 feet, from Whitegate Drive to the Borough boundary.

On considering the Report of the conference, the Committee decided to inform the Blackpool Corporation that, in the opinion of the Committee, a road 60 feet wide leading into Blackpool was quite sufficient for ordinary requirements, and that they were not at present prepared to recommend the County Council
to contribute towards any further extension of the road beyond that width.

The Committee had instructed the Clerk of the County Council to prepare an Agreement with the Blackpool Corporation and the Fylde Rural District Council in connexion with the proposed widening of the Main Road from the Blackpool Borough boundary to the Clifton Arms Hotel at Marton, and they recommended the Council to authorize their Seal to be affixed to the Agreement.

In May, 1924, the Committee reported that plans and estimates had been prepared for the widening of the road to 100 feet between fences. For the present a carriageway 40 feet in width was suggested, with a footpath on each side 10 feet wide. The road was to be laid out so as to utilise, as far as possible, the existing tarmacadam carriageway as foundation for the new road, and it was suggested that the additional widening required should be constructed of 9-inch rubble pitching on a 3-inch bed of ashes covered with a 3-inch limestone coat, the whole of the old and new portions to be shaped to an even contour and coated with a bituminous surfacing 4 inches thick. As there was a considerable amount of pedestrian traffic the footpaths were to be cindered for a width of 6 feet and covered with tarmacadam, the remaining width of 4 feet to be sodded. The estimated cost was £44,638 including purchase of lands and buildings, of which £3,905 would be paid by Blackpool Corporation. The scheme was to be considered as Unemployment Relief Works.

On 5 November, 1925, it was reported that there had been a recommendation from the Ministry of Transport for white lines to be painted on the road, while on 4 February, 1926, the Committee asked for improvement lines to be prescribed from Clifton to Little Marton, under the Public Health Act, 1925.

On 10 March, 1927, power was sought for the raising of £7,500 loan for improvements from Ashton Park to Five Lane Ends, being half the cost, and on 4 August, 1927, a statement of a cost of £15,000 for widening and improving west of Lea Road.

In November, 1927, it was reported that the Divisional Engineer of the Ministry of Transport was prepared to recommend a grant of 50 per cent. towards cost of £60,814 for completing the widening from Ashton Lane Ends to the junction of the road over Freckleton Marsh, 3,192 yards. There was to be distance of 60 feet between
fences and a 40-foot carriageway. The land had already been acquired and it was stressed that the work was necessary in view of increasing traffic.

In November, 1928, a report was published stating that the County Council had been informed from time to time of the extraordinary development in the volume of traffic using the Preston and Blackpool Main Road, and of the manner in which the Committee had sought to accommodate this traffic by carrying out several large improvements to the above road and to the Main Road over Freckleton Marsh through Lytham Saint Annes to Blackpool.

In the year 1925 the County Council sanctioned a scheme for the widening of a length of the Main Road between the Blackpool boundary and Little Marton, at an estimated cost of £52,957. Since then the following schemes had also been put in hand, and in each case the work was nearing completion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Widening</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plumpton</td>
<td>8,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>7,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashton No. 1</td>
<td>13,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashton No. 2</td>
<td>15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£44,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further scheme for the widening of the road from Lea to Three Nook Corner, at an estimated cost of £67,314 was also in progress. The Committee had always had in mind the ultimate widening of the whole length of the road between Preston and Blackpool to a width of 60 feet between fences, with a carriageway of 40 feet, and to complete this work the following improvements were required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Widening</th>
<th>£</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>By-pass at Clifton</td>
<td>36,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clifton to Dow Bridge</td>
<td>55,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By-pass at Kirkham</td>
<td>94,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirkham to Plumpton</td>
<td>92,497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumpton to Peel Bridge</td>
<td>53,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peel Bridge to Little Marton</td>
<td>75,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>£407,346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The County Surveyor and Bridgemaster was requested by the Committee to prepare the necessary plans and estimates for the above improvements, and these were submitted to the Ministry of Transport, with a view to arranging for the work to be carried out under a three years’ programme. The Ministry had now intimated that it had been found possible to allocate a grant of £35,000 towards the cost of widening further sections of the main road during the current financial year, and suggested that the undermentioned improvements should be commenced:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>From Kirkham By-pass</td>
<td>£30,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>From Scales to Clifton By-pass</td>
<td>£25,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>£55,233</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Ministry further suggested that, in order to absorb the whole of the grant of £35,000, additional works should be commenced during the current financial year which, together with the above-mentioned schemes, would bring the total estimated cost up to £70,000, and the Committee had requested the County Surveyor to commence negotiations at once in order to include in the current year’s work the cost of widening two railway bridges which would be affected by the widening of the Main Road.

The grant of £35,000 indicated by the Ministry was in addition to a grant which would be received towards the cost (estimated at £36,186) of constructing the Clifton By-pass Road.

With this understanding, the Committee proposed to complete the work under a three-years’ programme.

We have come now to the end of the story of the coming into being, and development up to 1930 of one of the greatest highways in the country, but it may be of interest, as a form of appendix, to discuss briefly the phenomenal growth of traffic.

Over a number of years censuses have been taken at Ashton-on-Ribble. The average daily weight in 1911 was 799 tons, in 1913, 1,368 tons, in 1921, 7,212, in 1922, 7,795, in 1925, 15,039, in 1928, 19,914, and in 1938, 32,281 tons. An interesting indication of the change in the character of the traffic is shown by the fact that
while in 1911 there were 37 per cent. of horsedrawn vehicles, in 1922 there were 2 per cent., in 1925 1 per cent., and in 1938 only 0.15 per cent.

Another interesting fact is that, although the Preston to Blackpool road is used mainly by passenger-carrying vehicles the records show that the daily weight of heavy commercial vehicles, excluding motor omnibuses and chars-a-bancs is nearly as great as the total weight of all classes of vehicle carried by such roads as that from Manchester to Ashton-under-Lyne.

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