

# Market Place

Market Place was the original centre for shopping in Prescot, with people travelling into the town to visit the market and fairs. In the 18th century 'Mugg Fairs' were also held there where people could buy Prescot pottery.



Market Place, published by J Edwards

Parishioners coming into Prescot on Sundays and Festivals brought produce to sell. In 1333 the Lord of the Manor, William D'Acre was granted a Charter to hold a Monday market which grew up around the Parish Church and Market Place area.

By the 1500s Prescot had developed into a small but busy market town, with most of the shops lining Market Place. Wells provided the water supply for the town, one of which was situated in Market Place, near the Market Cross and the stocks. The stocks were used as punishment, particularly on market days when the area was guaranteed to be busy.

In 1755 the Town Hall was built on Market Place. Shops occupied the street level of the building whilst the Court Leet business and the town's ceremonies took place above them. It was demolished in the 1960s, having fallen into disrepair.

A Market Hall was built in the 1860s on the site of the 'Round House' which had been the centre of the market from the early 1800s.

The fine red sandstone statue of 'Lady Bountiful' that once stood on top of the Round House in Market Place was saved and is now on display in Prescot Museum. She is holding a cornucopia, the symbol of prosperity and plenty.

<http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/things-to-see-and-do/galleries-and-museum.aspx>



The Town Hall, 1910



The Round House

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Market Place 1809, with the Round House, Town Hall and the gates to the churchyard

Market traders would gather under the shelter of the Round House to sell pottery and other goods. The rest of the market stalls selling food and produce, clustered around the Round House and spread up Market Place.

During the first part of the 19th century Prescot continued to grow and prosper. There was a rapid expansion of shops and stores. This was partly due to the new developments in local industry and the growth of a population with more spending power. By the early 20th century, the centre of Prescot was lined with a variety of specialist shops. In Victorian and Edwardian times there were many shops on Market Place including a printer & stationer, grocer, tailor, flour merchant and several butcher's.

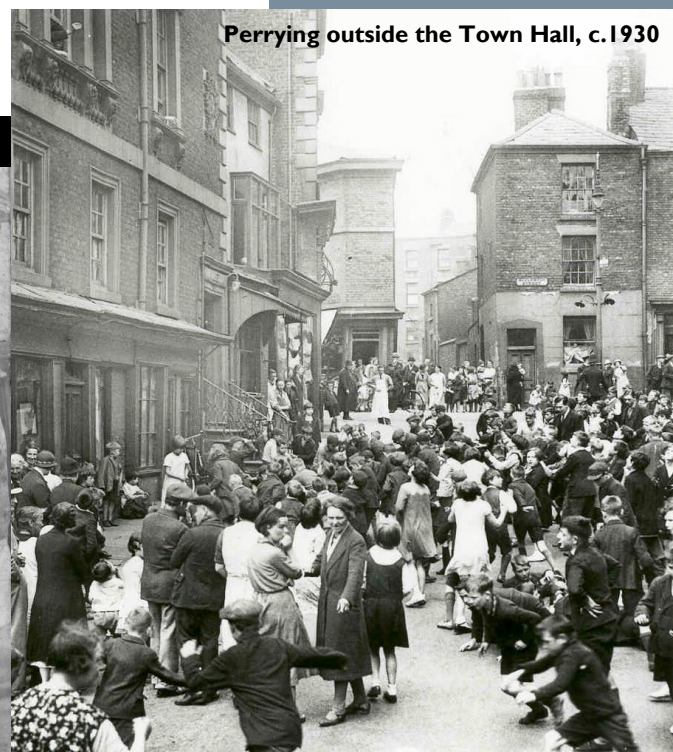
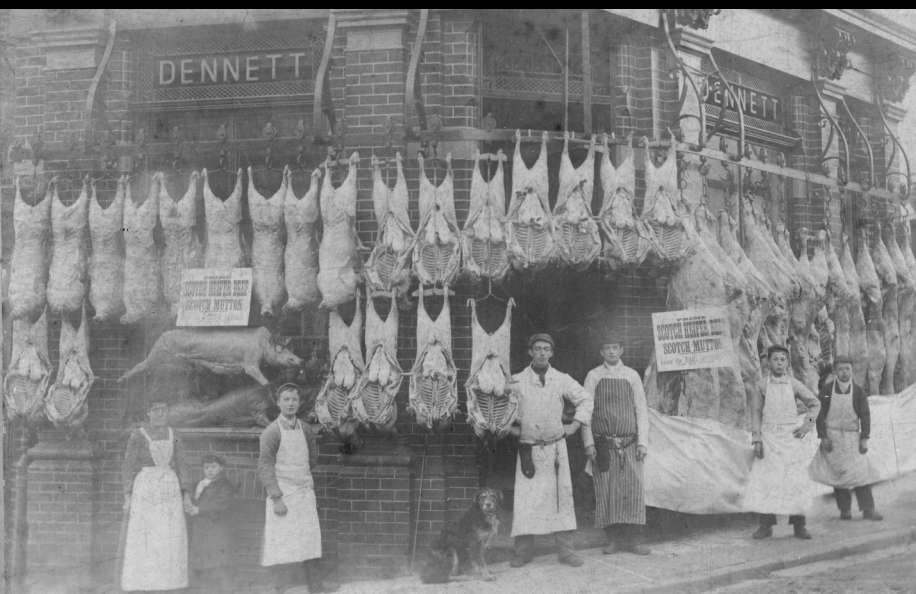
H M Williams was situated on Market Place Corner. He advertised his shop as 'Wholesale & Retail Chemist, Grocer, Agricultural & Garden Seedsman, Wine & Spirit Merchants'.

One of these butcher's shops belonged to Thomas Dennett, a local dignitary. Dennett's butchers shop was located on the corner of Market Place and Church Street. Meat was often displayed hanging outside the shop as complete carcasses, with only cloth to protect them from the dirt. The heavy carcasses were moved back inside on rails that ran from within the building.

Thomas Dennett was the first chairman of Prescot District Parish Council and a founding director of the Lancashire Watch Company. Dennett's butcher's shop was eventually taken over by his son-in-law Charles Brown.

Once a year, Officers of the Court Leet would give back the pennies collected in fines in a strange local custom called 'perrying'. The pennies would be heated on a shovel and then scattered down from the Town Hall to the street below.

Dennett's Butcher's Shop, around 1890



Perrying outside the Town Hall, c.1930