

WHITELOCK'S

Bohemia just off Briggate, Leeds

JACQUELINE WHITELOCK GILL

White
Clock's

JACQUELINE WHITELOCK BARROW-CLOUGH . . . What a name to burden me with. As a child, I was, perhaps, a tad sensitive, and hated the jibes this elaborate title evoked from my peers; and believe me they never missed an opportunity.

My first name Jacqueline, I like, but I hate Barrowclough to this day, especially when it is shortened or turned into something else, as it frequently was during my tormented days at school — no need to mention what it was turned into, enough to say it is a slang word for an outside privy.

And then there is Whiteclock . . . Now what kind of a second name is that? Why could it not have been Susan or Angela, like my two very best childhood friends, both of them clever, pretty, and bursting with confidence.

Now, of course, it matters not. Indeed as my parents predicted, when I insisted for the umpteenth time that my name be changed to Susan Angela Smith: "One day you will be proud to be a Whiteclock . . ."

In a small box, in the top drawer of an old spice chest — a very expensive impulse buy — there is a piece of Victorian jewellery, an ornamental clasp surrounded by semi precious stones, and in the centre is a picture of William Henry Whiteclock, my great-grandfather, and founder of Whiteclock's, a public house in Turk's Head Yard, Leeds; formerly the Turk's Head, a hostelry since 1715.

The first Whiteclock to become licensee of the Turk's Head was William Lupton Whiteclock, from 1866 to 1876. Thereafter it was tenanted by a Benji Wigglesworth, until, in the late 1880s, William Henry Whiteclock became the licensee.

It was during his time at the pub, until his death in 1909, that great changes were

made. It was renamed Whiteclock's First City Luncheon Bar — though the Turk's Head still appears on the licence to this day — and reflected perfectly almost every aspect of Victorian and Edwardian interior design excess. Indeed, William Henry Whiteclock, a flamboyant showman and teaser, for he played many a joke on his clientele, had excesses of his own, including gambling, but he created a marvel in Whiteclock's and it is a sadness that he was never to know how famous it would become, or for how long it would continue to prosper under the supervision of Scottish & Newcastle Breweries Ltd., who now own it.

Go there today, as I do on occasions, and be impressed. Subject to a preservation order, very little has changed. It would have been an act of vandalism to 'modernise', as was the vogue in the mid- 20th century, or to turn it into a contrived, latter day period piece.

William, and his wife Clara, my great grandmother, had three children, John Lupton and Percival Jarvis Whiteclock, and Beatrice Ada, my grandmother. All of them involved at one time or another in running the pub, which was gathering fame, not just in Leeds but throughout the county, country, and now the wider world; for I



My grandmother, Beatie Whiteclock, and my mother, Dorothy Whiteclock Jackson.

met a man at Heathrow airport, briefly in a staff transit lounge, a Canadian on his way home to some remote part of British Columbia via Vancouver, and he mentioned this super pub he had visited up in Leeds . . . Whitelock's.

Many famous faces were seen there during my great grandfather's days, and there have been many since, their reflections many faceted in the numerous mirrors which adorn the walls; in fact, it could be likened to a hall of mirrors.

John Betjeman, the poet, described it as the Leeds equivalent of Fleet Street's Old Cheshire Cheese, only far less self-conscious. Stan Barstow referred to it in his short story *Madge*. Madge . . . of the title, is taken, by Edgar, to this 'real old music hall pub' in a narrow yard down an alley between two shops. It is their first date and Edgar offers her a splendid meal.

That was 40 years ago when the story was written, and the food is splendid still. Just as it was in my great grandfather's time when . . . Refreshments of the best quality were offered — as advertised in the *Yorkshire Owl*, dated 23rd August, 1893 — which included great chunks of roast beef, steak and kidney pie, and sausage and mash.

My grandmother, Beatrice Whitelock Jackson after marriage, had two children, Muriel, my aunt, who died in the early 1950s, and Dorothy, my mother, now in her 83rd year, and ever since I was old enough to take an interest, she has regaled me with tales of the pub and my colourful predecessors.

William, her grandfather, who died long before my mother was born, extrovert as much as licensee, welcomed all comers alike regardless of status, and to keep order amidst the hustle, bustle, and noise generated, he employed Thaddeus Myland, a great bear of an Irishman with a woolly beard and booming voice.

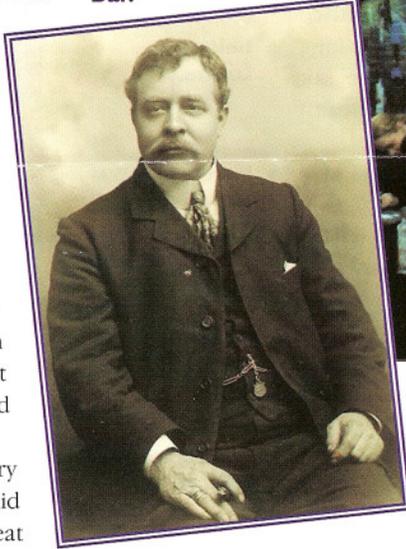
It is also suggested the he employed midgets, dwarfs, giants, and a bearded lady to serve in the bar. A little far-fetched to be true, I think.

However, he did have an eye for a pretty barmaid as being a way to increase trade; one, particularly, caught the eye of Jacob Kramer, the artist, a Russian Jew who arrived in England in 1900 at the age of eight — a refugee, perhaps, from the threat of the pogroms? — and it is believed painted her portrait. Though where it is now I do not know, in a private collection, perhaps? Jacob Kramer died in 1962.

Following William's death from tuber-

Right, pop art outside Whitelock's.

Below, William Henry Whitelock, my great grandfather and founder of Whitelock's First City Luncheon Bar.



Beatie (Beatrice) Whitelock Jackson with the kind and saintly Arthur.



Clara Whitelock, my great grandmother, and Dorothy Whitelock Jackson, my mother. Clara is wearing the brooch which now belongs to me.

culosis in 1909, his wife Clara — wearing the aforementioned clasp, given to me by mother, in all the photographs I have of her — took over the licence, and with the help of her sons Lupton and Percival (Percy) ran the pub.

Incidentally, she had a twin sister Ada, and in 1936, at the age of 80, they were believed to be the oldest twin sisters in the country.

Both Lupton and Percy were gifted musicians, Lupton being one of the finest flautists in Britain, playing with the then Leeds Symphony Orchestra (later the Northern Philharmonic).

Percy, an oboist, played with the Leeds Grand Theatre Orchestra. Unfortunately, running the pub and restaurant severely restricted their musical careers, but there were advantages in so far as Whitelock's became very popular with the theatrical set, and it is said that Bohemia flourished there.

It is strange for me, when I visit the pub, indulging in one of their delicious meals, to imagine family members, suited and starched Victorians and Edwardians, stand-

- Continued

ing behind that polished bar, or mingling with the customers; for as well as actors, music-hall performers and musicians, there were painters, writers, politicians, poets and philosophers among the clientele.

I feel their presence, and the ghosts of my family, perhaps, as they look out from their photographic portraits which hang on the walls; and even though I never knew them I see a family likeness running through the generations to the present day.

There are drinkers and diners all around, and an old man sitting next to me explains how he had been coming to Whitelock's for years. A vibrant scene now, just as in my great grandfather's day. Only now it is business men, students, shop and office workers, tourists, etc., who prop themselves against the bar which, by any standards, is a work of art, or sit at the copper-topped cast iron tables, all shrouded in a mist of tobacco smoke. The smells, the noise, the atmosphere, as heady today as it was long ago.

Neither my Aunt Muriel, nor my mother, born in 1905 and 1918 respectively, worked in the pub, but I am led to believe that over the years most other family members did, including Lupton's and Percy's offspring, and Clara's twin sister Ada's five children.

However, my mother and aunt were seduced by its colour and excitement, and both met their future husbands there; both husbands turning out to be endearing rascallions . . . Much to my grandmother Beatrice's dismay, to have two prodigal sons-in-law. She also met her husband, the saintly and kind bank manager, Arthur Jackson, in Whitelock's. His life, sadly, was short, so I never knew him.

At 26, my father, an ex-speedway (dirt track) champion and intrepid airman, bowled into the pub and swept my mother, then only 17, off her feet. That was in the late 1930s.

A year or two later the war came, and only then did Beatrice, with both parents now dead, and a long-time widow herself, start working in Whitelock's. Staff were hard to find, almost every able bodied person doing war work, or seconded into

the forces — including my father who was a pilot with the R.A.F.

Things were coming to a head . . . In 1940 Clara died, only months after her son Lupton. It was a tragedy for the family. Percy and Beatrice carried on for as long as they were able, but both had health problems.

Consequently, in 1945, Whitelock's was sold to the Scottish brewers, William Younger & Co Ltd., (now Scottish & Newcastle Breweries Ltd.).

My Aunt Muriel (right) with my mother, Dorothy Whitelock Jackson.



Apart from one other, Joan Frampton, now very old and living in the south of England, my mother is the only one of William and Clara's grandchildren living today.

In 1945, when the pub was sold she was 27 years old. Her husband was recently back from the war, she had two small children, and was looking forward to a new life, so I don't suppose she mourned its passing. Grandma and Percy may have had mixed feelings but I shall never know.

Now though, my mother's memories are of the fondest variety, and there is pride too, that her grandfather created something which continues to thrive. A curiosity of a public house, tucked away in an alley, off Briggate, Leeds, its original name, the Turk's Head, still written into the leaded stained glass windows.

Viewing Whitelock's from the outside, the move inside is almost involuntary, as though its history is drawing you in to breathe the air of things past. It is a time machine to take you back, a time capsule for future generations, and a microcosm where you can remain for a while in that notional 'idyll' we know as Victorian Britain. □

My grandmother Beatrice Whitelock (right). Clara Whitelock, my great grandmother (left), wearing the brooch (at that time a pendant) which now belongs to me.



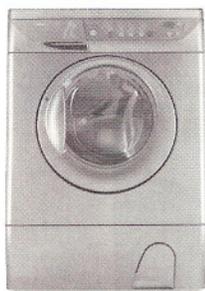
My mother Dorothy Whitelock Jackson — super legs!

Lupton Whitelock, my great uncle, with his son Godfrey who became a solicitor.



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