

Life 70 years Ago

I wonder how many people can remember what life was like 70 years ago it was not bad but there was no excitement as there is today. We used to go dancing, sometimes to a wooden hut at the top of Lanehead Lane, and sometime to a barn on Cowtoot Lane with oil lamps on the wall. There was a dancing class at the Liberal club on Wednesday and Saturday nights. It was 3d on a Wednesday and 6d on a Saturday. There there were Sunday school tea parties and concerts and on Tuesday nights we had magic lantern slides. Most of all we looked forward to Bacup Fair. We used to save up for months for it. There were so many people there you could have walked on top of their heads. There was everything you could have wished for shows, coconut stalls, swings, horses, hoop-lahs, roundabouts and show people. It always came at Whitsuntide and we stopped work from Friday until Tuesday. Then there was Bacup market on a Wednesday, where there were so many quacks you would never need a doctor if you bought all their medicine. Then came the 1914 war, I don't think anyone will ever forget the hard time we had before the rationing came into force. We had to que for hours for a quarter of margarine. During the war there was not much transport. If you went to Burnley you most certainly would have to walk back. Soon after the war was over my husband came home. When Burnley were playing at home we always went to watch them. Coaches did not run then so we were lucky to get seats on a lorry. They used to have seats and sides but no roof and they ran from the garage at the bottom of Burnley Road. We always walked back over the moors. I wonder if anyone remembers the day before we had electricity. The gas lighter used to come round every night with his long pole to light all the gas lights and round again at midnight to turn them off. Lights were never left burning all night and nearly everyone went to bed about 10 o'clock as they had to get up early the next morning at 6 o'clock. Of course they had to take lunch, tea and sugar to work for a brew about 8 o'clock. Nearly everyone had to walk to work as there was not much transport. Wages were very poor and everyone wore clogs, as they lasted longer than shoes. It would be nice to hear clogs clattering down the road again. Then there were oil lamps and candles. Some had an oil lamp in the centre of the table or on a dresser or sideboard. Others had one suspended from the ceiling. There were candles in the kitchens and bedrooms. Then on Friday nights a man used to come round with a horse and cart selling lamp oil. I think a pint of oil lasted a week. In the house we had stone flags and no carpets.

Mrs Elizabeth Goulding.