

Reappropriating Cultural Memories.

Using animation as a method of reframing and repositioning historical events.

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The Preston Lockouts

Preston was a central combat zone of Industrial unrest in 1853 - 1854. The mill workers went on strike for 10 % more money . The surrounding mills paid, but Preston's mill owners refused. When the mill workers went on strike, they locked the mills. This was the beginning of a long drawn out dispute between the Preston mill owners and the workers called 'The Preston Lockouts.



This drawing was found in the Lancashire Archives in the scrap books of cotton manufacturer, Henry Ashworth (who was bitterly opposed to the strike) and George Cowell, (who led the weavers during the strike). I have used these drawings to create a short animation to give a new perspective to this event. This short film will be used as a taster to apply for funding to make a longer film that goes into more depth based on these drawings and bring to life this event through these cultural artefacts.

Fig 1 Illustration from Lancashire Archives DDPR 138-87B Mr Large Firm

Nº 1 OF THE PRESTON LOCK-OUT ILLUSTRATED

Mr Large Firm

WELL MASTER YOU MUST MAKE AN EXCHANGE WITH MR COWELL AND THE OTHER DELEGATES FOR THAIR GOOD PEOPLE

MANAGER THOSE KNOBSTICKS WILL NEVER DO I MUST SEND THEM BACK-A-GAIN WHERE THEY COME FROM

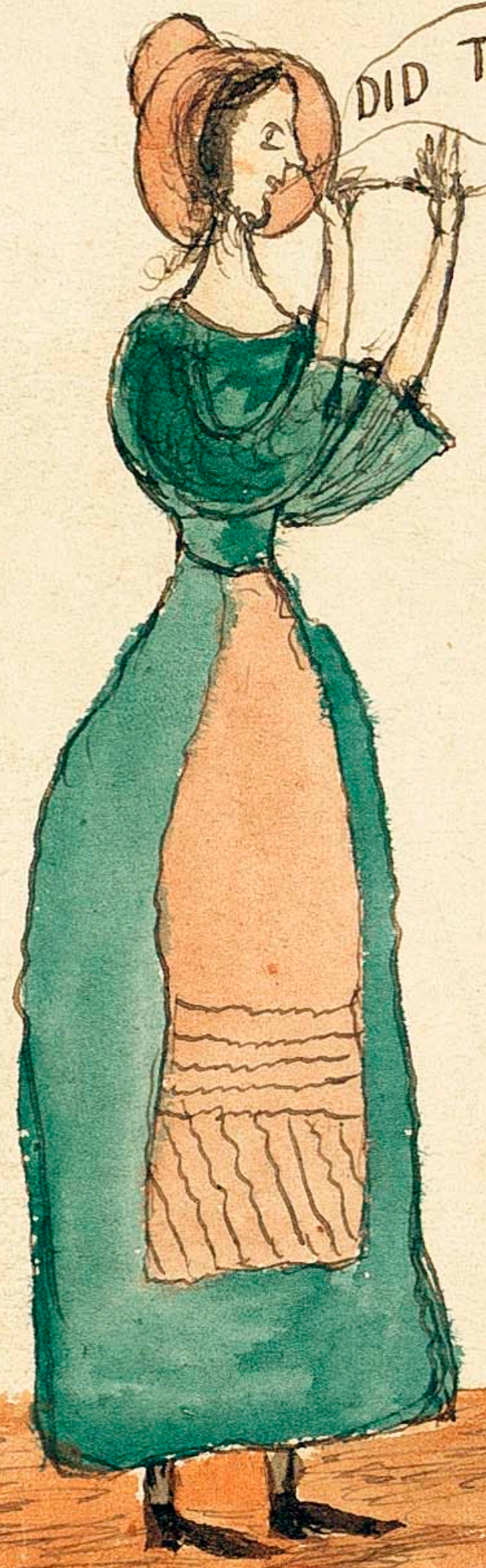
I AM COMMING FOR THE MR LARGE FIRM THY TIME IS UP THOU GRINDER OF THE POOR



A BOX FULL OF NEW KNOBSTICKS

THEY COST FIVE SHILLINGS GARRAGE

Recruitment Sergeant

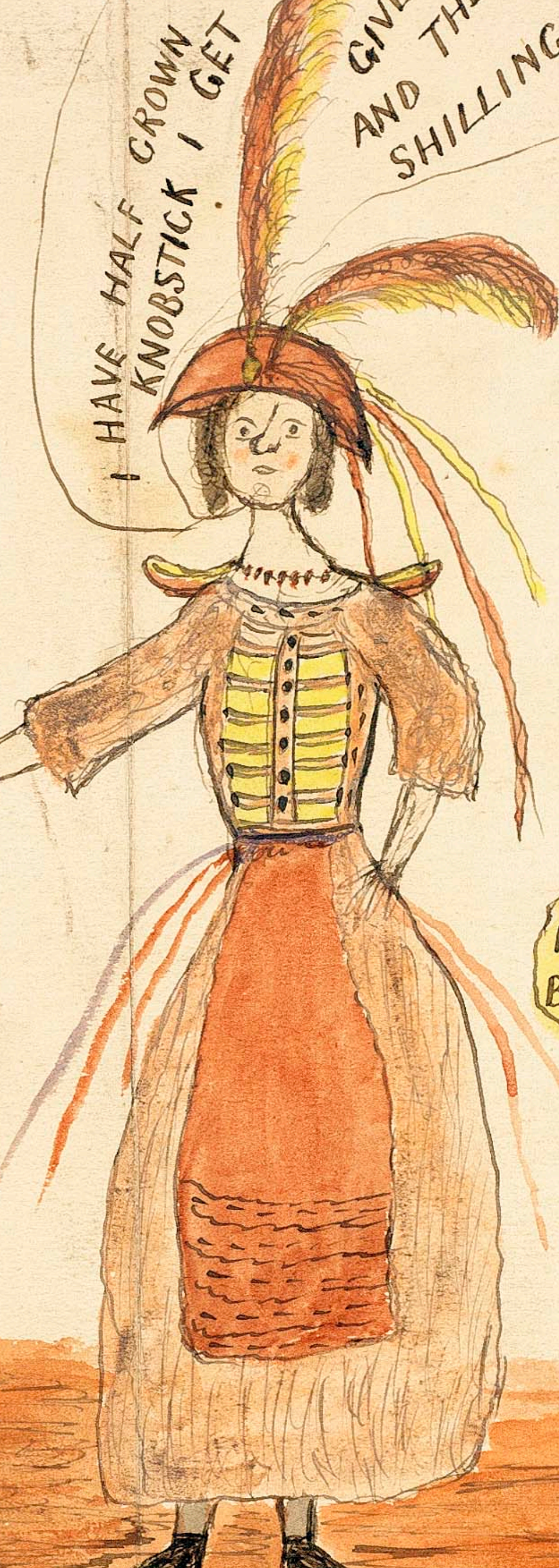


DID THOU EVER SEE BACON THIS THICKNESS MISS ALICE SNUFFEY



I WILL PUNCH THE SIXPENCE OUT OF THY HAND THOU MASTERS TOOL

TAKE THIS SIXPENCE NOW



I HAVE HALF CROWN KNOBSTICK I GET

GIVE AND THE SHILLINGS LEFT

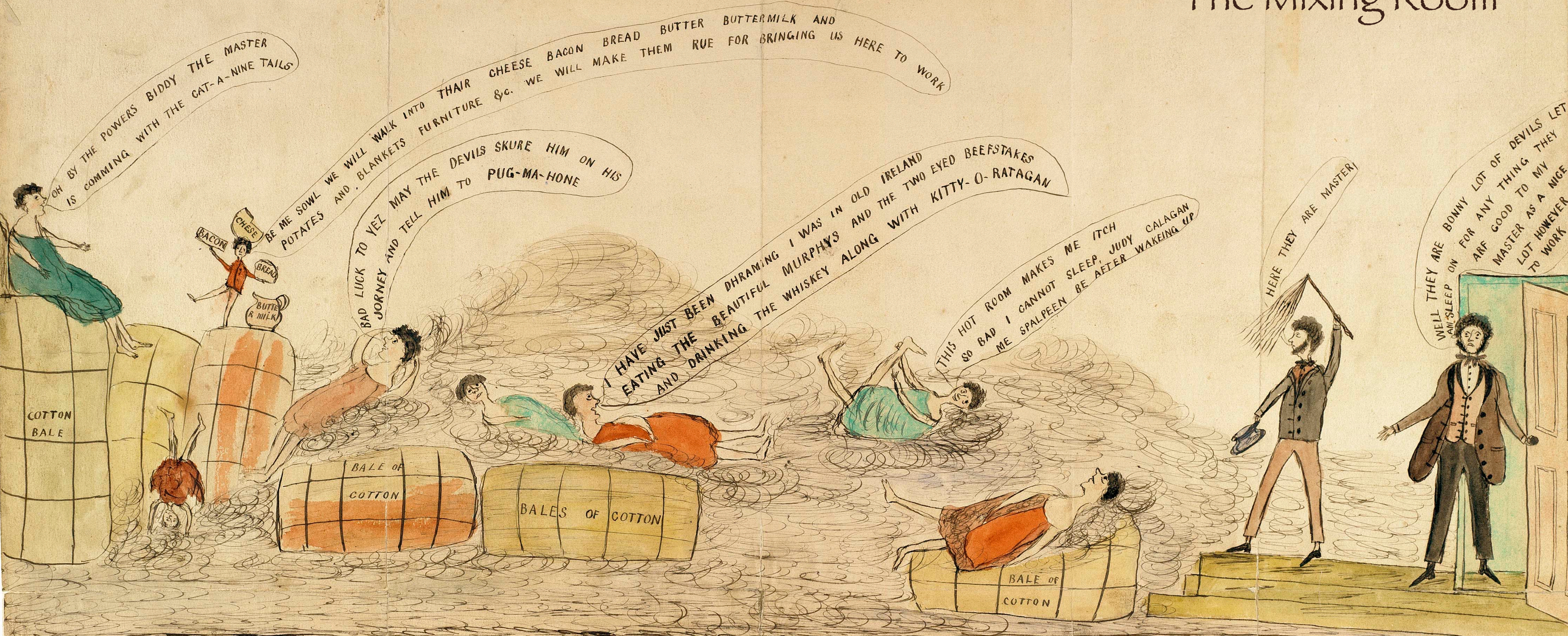
SHURE-AN NOW SHE AS BOUGHT ME SOME NEW CLOTH'S

BAD LUCK TO YEZ I WILL AFTER POPPING THEM OR SELLING THEM FOR SOME OF THE CRATURE

The Devil Room



The Mixing Room



THE MIXING ROOM.

THE OVERLOOKER

THE MANAGER

This Scene took place in a Factory leading out of the North Road one day last week the Man that had to look over them put them to work at 9-0-Clock in the morning and then he went to his Breakfast and when he came back they had all got a sleep befor 10-0-Clock he went and told the Manager to come and look at them they was a sleep snorning and dreaming scratching and kicking in all directions it was so warm for creepers to

The Warping and Winding Room



THE OVERLOOKER

WIG
TUTIES

I SAY YOU YOUNG DEVL COME DOWN YOU ARE
SURE TO BE KILT

SHURE A NOW THE DEVILS SKURE
TO YES MIKE COME DOWN WID YES

OH BY JASES HOW
THE ENDS BRAKES
DOWN

Bobbins

BOBIN
BOX

THE WARPING AND WINDING ROOM HANOVER ST MILL

What is cultural Memory?

Traditionally, it is through oral history that we learn cultural, and political events as a collective memory. This practice can really only extend over one hundred years into the past and after this we rely on artefacts, papers, records, and pictures to have an understanding of past events. As time moves on and we become more distant from these events, so some incidents become remembered and others not. Some occurrences maybe recorded that reflect the cultural norm of that time.

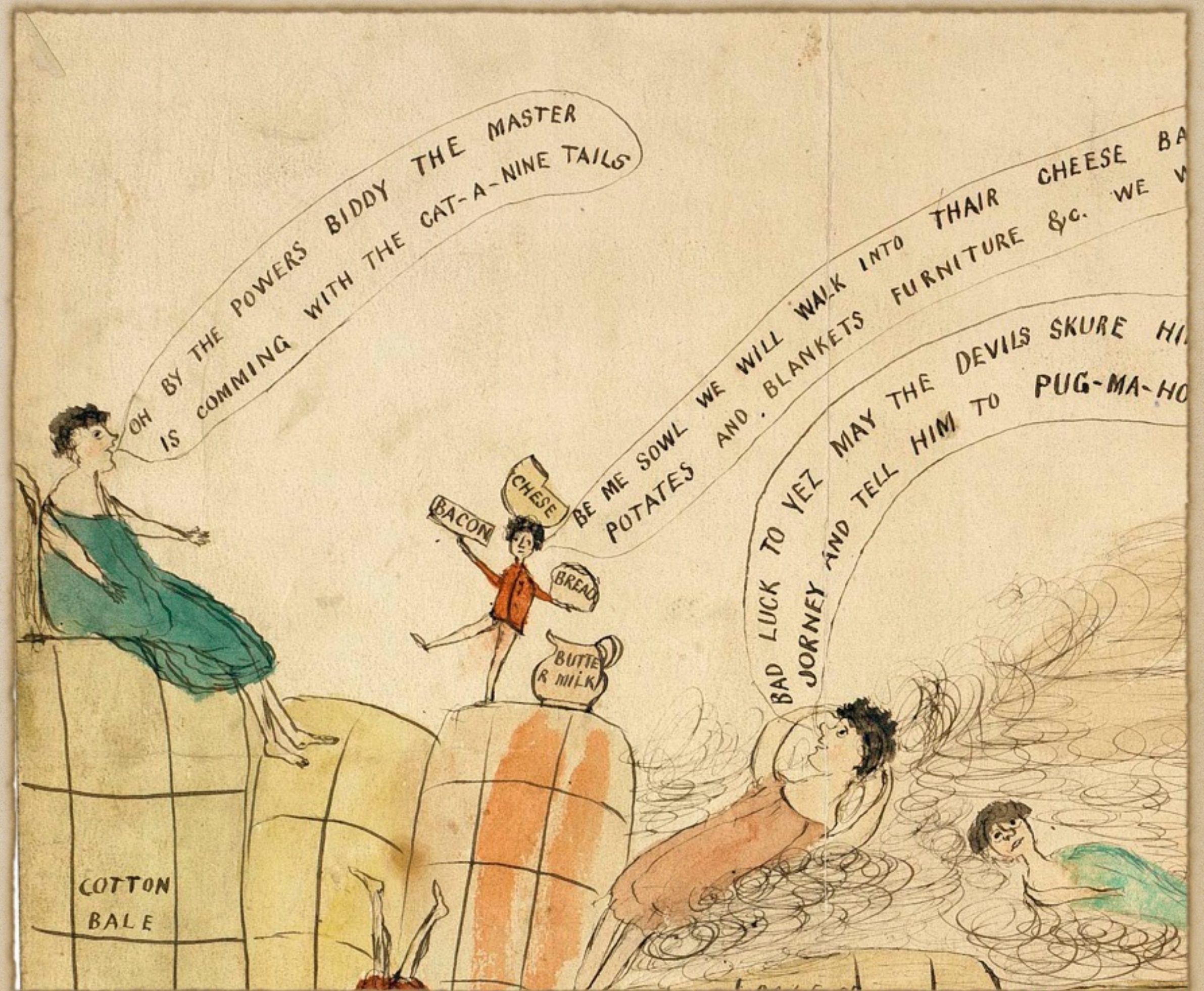


Fig 2 Illustration from Lancashire Archives DDPR 138-87B The Mixing Room

‘Cultural memory is characterised by distance from the everyday’ (Assman, 129)



Fig 3 Illustration from Lancashire Archives DDPR 138-87B The Mixing Room

All that is left from this time are the newspaper cuttings and these drawings that are in the Lancashire Archives. Cultural memory also manifests itself through widely available literature like *‘Hard Times’* by Charles Dickens, *‘North and South’* by Elizabeth Gaskell and *‘Ten Percent or No Surrender’* by H.I. Dutton and J.E. King as well as these drawings. There is little attention paid to the role of women and the Irish in literature above and yet these drawings focus on this.

- ‘The Belfast Contingency , for example was ‘a wretched specimen of what Irish famine has reduced the peasantry of that country to.’ (H.I. Dutton & J.E. King, 179)
- ‘April 1st More Irish via Fleetwood persuaded to come over with false promises from the employers. The Irish were in want of clothes and food, desperate - old and young.’(Preston Chronicle, 1854)
- ‘Irish arrived March 4th. “WeWe very much regret that the arrival of various bodes of persons from Ireland and elsewhere , to fill some of the vacant places in the mills, and produced unusual excitement in the town; and this has led to measures, on the behalf of the authorities, some of which there is reason to fear, however well-intentioned, may not prove to have been the best adapted to the present state of affairs.’(Preston Guardian, 1854
- Assault and Intimidation - A lad named Thomas Loxham was charged at the Town-hall, by a married woman Ann McKenny, one of Swainsons and Birley’s hand’s, with having struck her and called her an ‘Irish Knobstick’ and shortly afterwards struck her on the back of the neck with a stick’ (Preston Chronicle 1854)



Fig 4 Screen shot BBC adaption '*Hard Times*'.

'Hard Times' surveys and satirises social and economic conditions of the time in 1854. It is set in a fictitious city 'Coketown', a generic Northern Mill town, which could be based on Manchester but many people believe was Preston. The novel itself has several themes running through it and the characters represent different aspects of society as Dickens saw it at that time. The popular hard detached Utilitarianism, Victorian femininity to counterbalance mechanisation and industry, as well as questioning the whole notion of social mobility. The strike is used as a plot vehicle to illustrate moral integrity and doesn't play a major part in the book itself but more of a background to the lives of the inhabitants of Coketown.



Fig 5 Screen shot BBC Adaptation
'North and South'.

'*North and South*' focuses on the divide between the idyllic rural south and the industrial north with its exploitative Capitalist manufacturers and poverty-stricken workers. The plot is centred around Margaret Hale, a Southerner who is forced to move to the North and learns to overcome her prejudices against the north by being charmed by manufacturer John Thornton. It's basically a classic love story between two people from clashing cultures. Although penned by a woman, Dickens was quite forceful about the title and she was also restricted by the magazine format and the editor. There is more reference to the strike than *Hard Times*, and the use of Irish workers as replacement during the strike but there is little focus on these replacements or the workers from surrounding mills. The addition of these Irish characters and the starving workers act as a catalyst for the development of the main characters Margaret and John and their relationship.

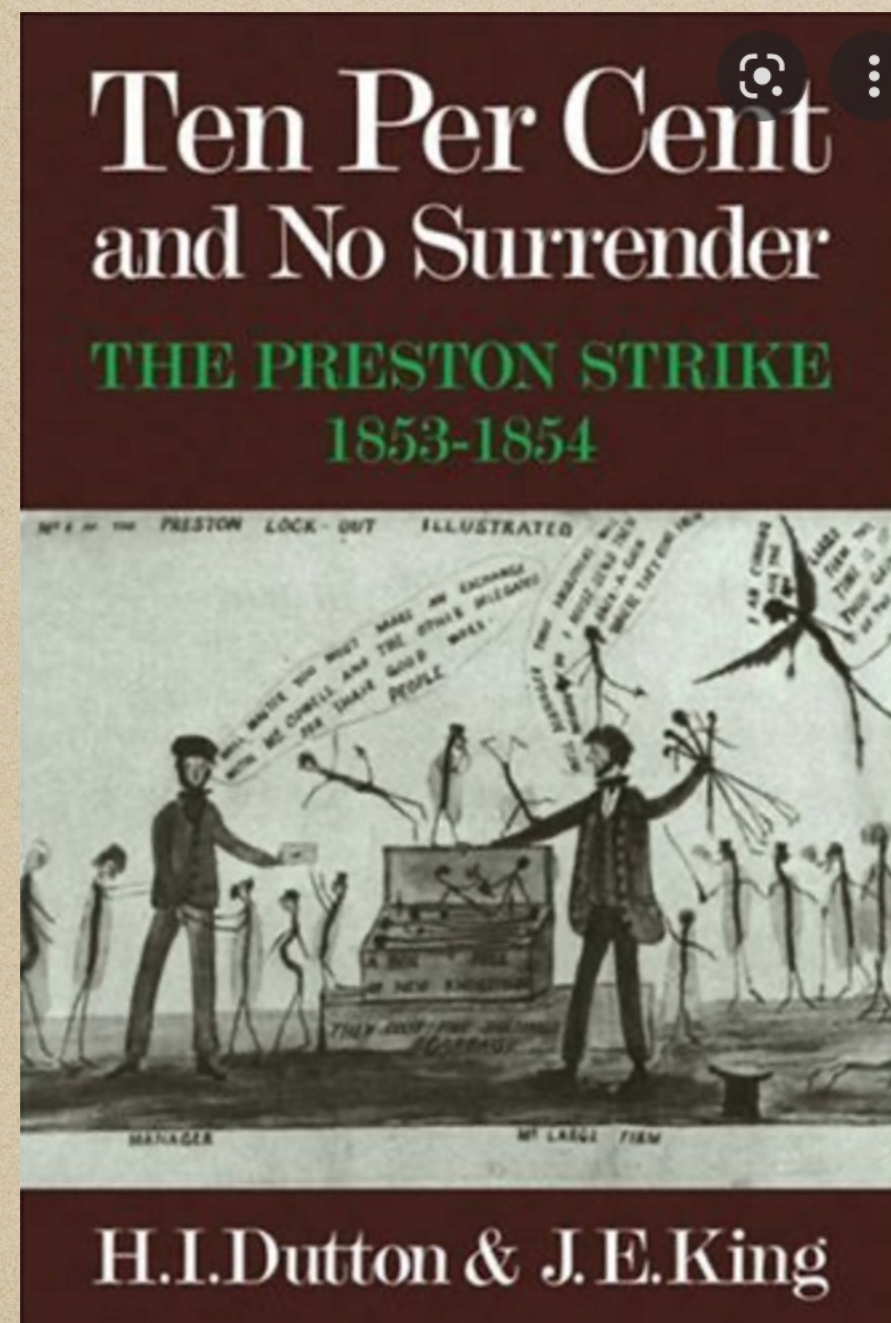


Fig 6 Book Cover '*Ten Per Cent And No Surrender. The Preston Strike 1853-54*'.

'Ten percent and no surrender The Preston Strike, 1853 -1854' is a study of the strike itself. 'The town of Preston was a crucial battlefield, and here the masters and men fought out a bitter trial of strength'. This statement is taken from the description of the book on Cambridge University Press website. The picture that adorns the cover of this book is one of the illustrations found in the scrapbooks of Henry Ashworth and George Cowell, men from opposing sides of the argument. The information was gleaned from the newspapers of the day contained in these scrapbooks, contemporary newspapers, public record office, ministry of health papers, parliamentary papers, journal articles and unpublished thesis's. There are 8 pages on the role of women in this fight and their place in the working practice of the mills in a 204 page book.

- By 1853 'The occupation (factory weavers) was dominated by women who had little experience of organisation and lacked self-confidence which the (male) spinners derived from recruiting and controlling their assistants.' (19, Dutton, King)
- There is some dispute in the numbers of workers that were locked out but at least 80% of production capacity was closed.
- Rev. John Clay is thought to have provided the most accurate number at 17,000. 'There were 6,200 males and 11,800 females.' (94, Dutton, King)



Fig 7 Still from *'The Knobsticks'* directed by Sarah Ann Kennedy

The aim of this presentation and the short film is to add to the cultural memory of this event through popular culture i.e animation, and focus on some of stories of the Irish women from Belfast who were bought in to work in the mills during this time and featured in these drawings. The film I'm going to show is a taster for a longer film where I would like to taking artefacts like these drawings and bring them to life will help to trigger some social interaction with these characters and give their lives some meaning. The drawings clearly feature the voices of Irish people and although it isn't clear who created these drawings there is some evidence that they were created by someone who was sympathetic with the striking workers but who has little regard for the Irish replacements, or the mill owner in these drawings.

A new lens for the construction of Cultural Memory

These sketches were a way for strikers to express how they felt about the strike. The papers and subsequent written material mainly focused on the plight of the men in charge, women on the periphery or women who were the focus of romantic interest such as *'Hard Times'* and *'North and South'*. *'Ten percent and no surrender. The Preston Strike 1853-1854.'* is an academic historical book but again there is little mention of the women's involvement in this struggle or the part they played. On further examination of the newspapers it becomes apparent that women played a key role not only through their role as a Knobsticks but as strikers, and speakers but there is little or no inclusion of this in the stories constructed after and around this event but there is some evidence in these drawings and in the newspapers in the scrap books.



Fig 8 Illustration from Lancashire Archives 138-87B The Devil Room

Representation

The appearance of a woman on the platform was a rare thing but sufficient to disconcert the gentlemen of the press.’ (Dutton, H.I. & King, J.E. 1981. P52). Middle class women Margaret and Ann Fletcher and their sister-in-law Mrs Cooper were passionate speakers on the side of the workers, ‘the grinding capitalist men who had risen from the dunghill’ (MET 1853) but according to Dutton and King these women were no more than subordinates, despite their huge numbers turning out. As was the custom of middle class women, these women protested the fundamental right NOT to work. ‘It is a disgrace to an Englishman,’ Margaret Fletcher told an enthusiastic audience in the Orchard in November 1853, ‘to allow his wife to go out to work. Let the women look after our rights, it is high time we look at ourselves. We have let the men manage our affairs long enough, and a pretty position they have brought us to.’ (PC 12.11.1853) These women supported the strike so that the male workers could be paid enough that the married women could stay at home and look after their children and their homes. They felt society would be a more stable, fair place and there would be less debauchery, crime and violence on the streets

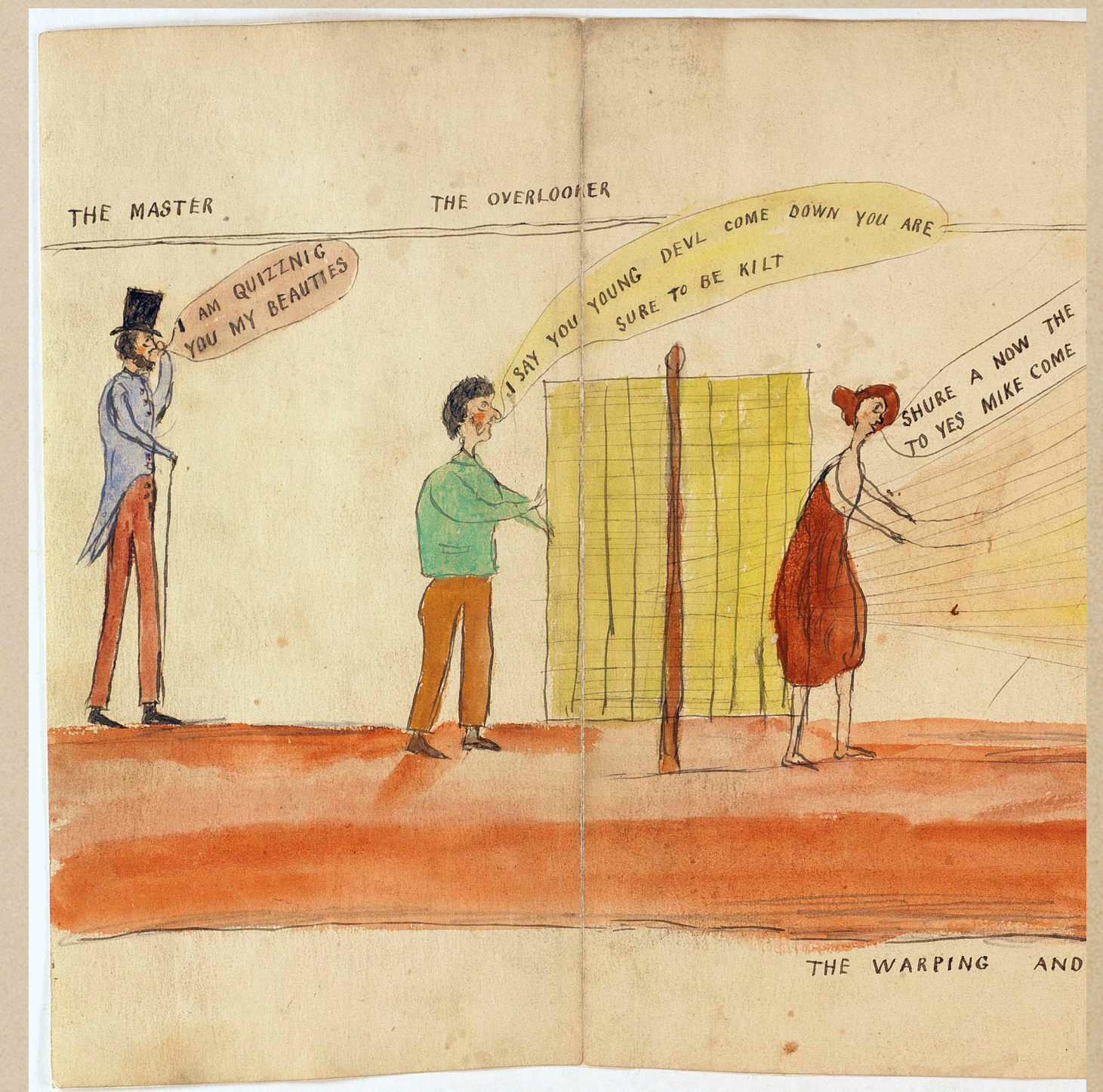


Fig 9 Illustration from Lancashire Archives DDPR 138-87B
The Warp and Winding Room

The Irish

The Irish were invited by the manufacturers in mid March 1854, the strike had started in 1853 so by this time the workers were getting desperate and so were the mill owners. They were encouraged by lies and promises that were not fulfilled. The Irish were compliant because they were starving. The potato famine caused the biggest exodus of people ever in Ireland. The potato famine wasn't just because of potato blight but because the English landowners insisted on taking whatever good potatoes they had for themselves.

The Southern Irish were the first to arrive at Preston train station but were booed and most of them headed back or somewhere else. The English manufacturers decided to get people that were even more desperate. Northern Irish old men, women and children from a poor house in Belfast. They sneaked them in through Fleetwood and they lived and worked in the mills.

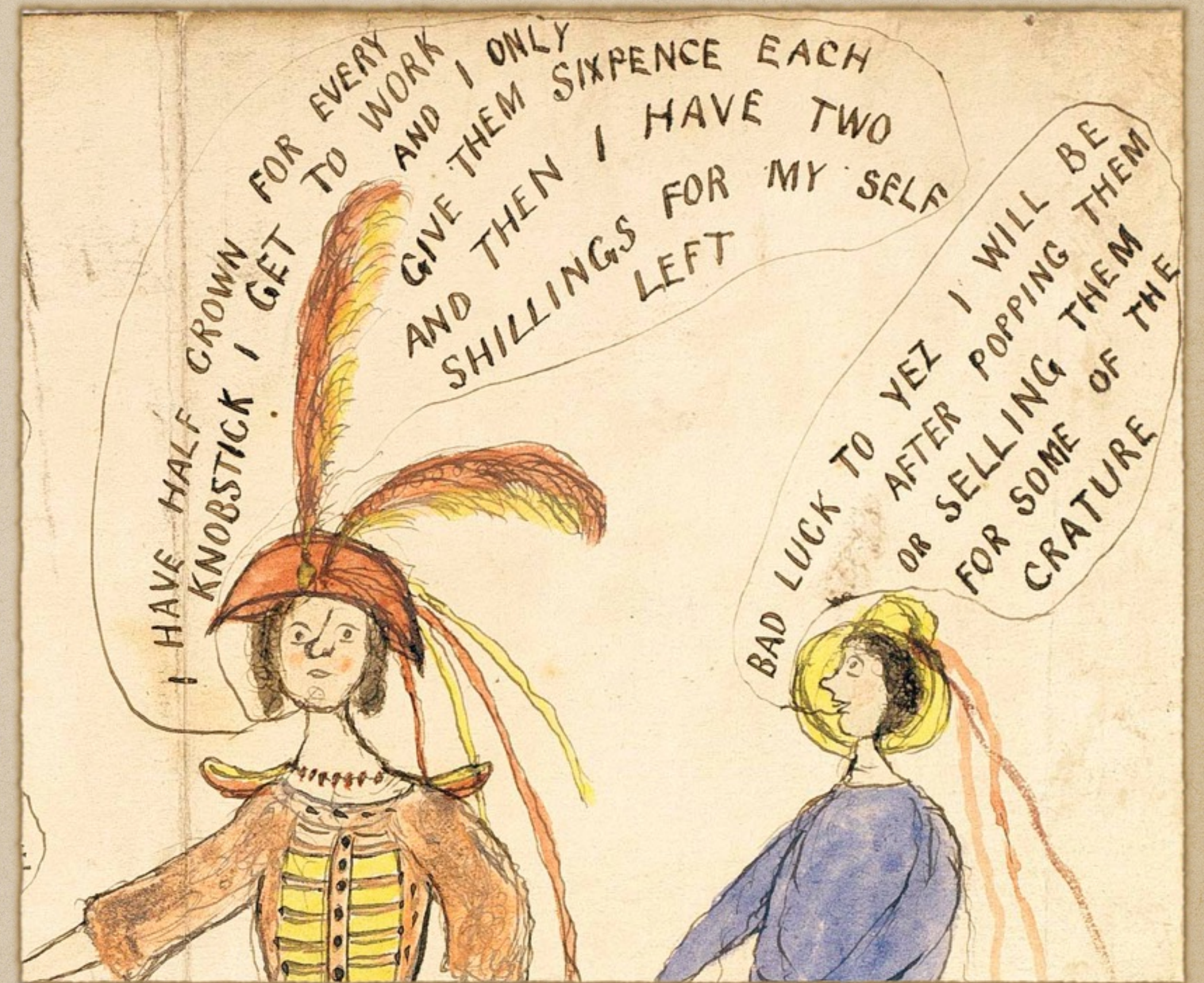


Fig 10 Illustration from Lancashire Archives DDPR 138-87B
Recruiting Sergeant

The Knobsticks

These migrant workers just couldn't compete with the skilled workforce. The production output was not only down on quantity but on quality.

These drawings tell an interesting story. The writing is more conversational and reflective of the strikers - many whom would have been illiterate and unable to read the papers. There is also a lot of focus on the women and the attitudes of the mill owners to these women who were brought into keep the mills turning over during the strike. There is also some reference to the Irish migrants not just through the language and dialogue of these drawings but through the symbolism used - the inclusion of the shillelagh to represent the new 'knobstick' workers. Although not all the 'knobsticks' were Irish they clearly had little or no respect for them.



Fig 11 Illustration from Lancashire Archives DDPR 138-87B Mr Large Firm

Women

The drawings mainly featured Irish women. If you look at the drawings and the position of the women's hands this infers that these women were just lying about masturbating. Many of the drawings include women with no tops on and bare breasts. There is little or no respect for these poor, desperate migrant female workers for Ireland. On examining the newspaper cuttings at the time there doesn't seem to be much respect for any of the women workers where ever they came from, 'As a female, one of Mr Hollins hands, was going home from the mill last Thursday evening, a man came behind her, and struck her violently on the back twice, which knocked her down, and left her nearly insensible' (1853, Manchester Guardian.) These stories were not isolated which indicates that the Preston Lockouts was not such a peaceful protest as is generally thought.

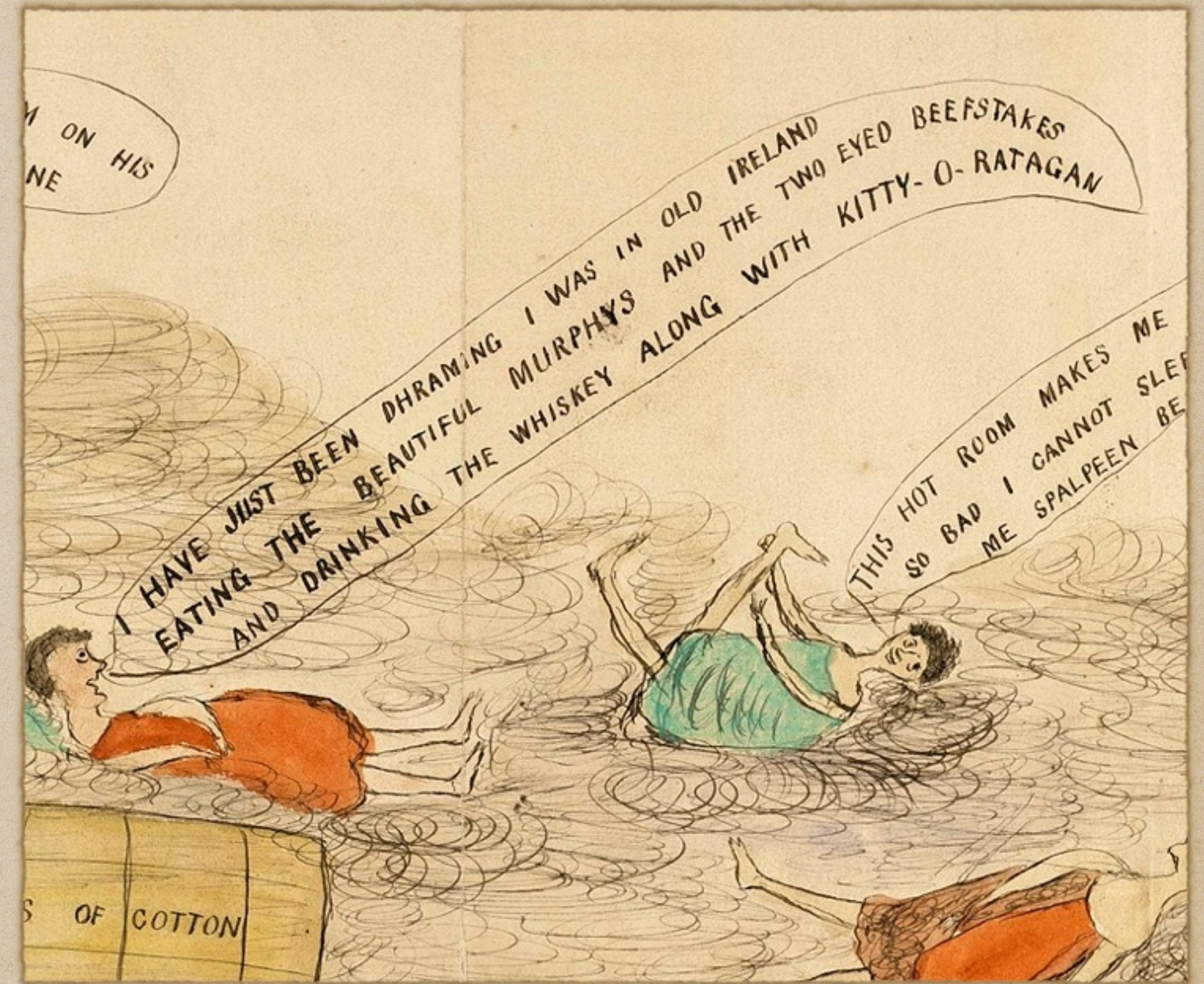


Fig 12 Illustration from Lancashire Archives DDP 138 The Mixing Room

Animation and Cultural Memory

Animation can play a role in creating a new lens to construct and represent a new perspective of these events. By using the imagery created at this time the aim is to recount the original narrative and re think the role that these women played in this event.

By taking the images of these women and placing them in a moving scene with voices , to be viewed by a modern audience, our engagement with this story changes. The history of this event becomes peppered with the plight of women at this time as well. The events have more dimension as the audience can see the effect of this not just on the males workers, but on the migrants and the female workers and the parallels with today.



Fig 13 Illustration by Georgia Little student Intern

Authenticity

- The female Northern Irish voices were provided by Belfast Metropolitan College.
- The background sound of the mills was a recording of a working mill.
- The song Home Sweet Home was written before this event in 1823 and was sung by UCLan student Robyn ... (I need to find this out)



The Irish Problem

- The Lancaster Moor Hospital was built in 1816
- The Whittingham Asylum was built in 1869 ‘for pauper lunatics’
- There are records from these asylums and the number of Catholic inmates with Irish names increased around the time of the potato famine and the end of the lockouts.



Fig 14 Screenshot of Whittingham Hospital



‘Drawing, words, photography and animation, when mixed together, have the potential to affect a viewer on a conscious level, while also immersing the viewer in the past’ (Harris, 2020).

Fig 15 Illustration from Lancashire Archives DDPR 138 The Mixing Room

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Fig 16 Illustration from Lancashire Archives DDPR 138 The Devil Room