

## *Memories of F Robertshaw Born about 1875 in Bacup.*

I had to go into the weaving shed at Top- oth- fold the day I became 10 years old, to learn weaving on sheeting looms under my father, but was not there long before Top-oth-fold mill closed down, and later I went to Shepherds Mill. to work in the card room, at first and later on in the cotton rom, where I worked with a man by the name of Monks, who only had one arm. Our work was picking cotton off the sacking which was round the bales. Another of our jobs was to help make the mixings of different cottons, which was done twice a week. A lot of the work done at Shepherds was known as "Shoddy goods" for it was a mixture of cottons. When I became 13 years old, I had ot go into the big weaving shed as a tenter, and for that the wage was 6/-a week and 6d for spence for the lad. I went to work for a man called Bob Cowside and he was a bully who made things bad for any of the lads who used to have to work under him.

The lads used to have a lively time on the 21st of March, the first day of spring for when they went to breakfast they used to get outside and have a run around the town before they went into work, and as a rule they were locked out. They had then to go to the office and see Mr Thomas the weaving manager, before they got to start work and then they would get a could kick from the weaver they worked with or maybe a good boxing around the ears. A curious thing happened while I was working with old Bob. There had been a lot of talk about putting shuttle guards on the looms, to stop the shuttles flying out of the looms. It was a good thing, for a number of weavers had lost the sight of an eye from shuttles flying .At Shepherds they put those guards on some of the sheeting looms, but one day a shuttle still managed to fly out of one loom, and passing along it caught one man just as he was bending down to pick up some waste paper off the floor. That man was Fred Gower's and when he picked himself up he started clouting hit tenter for knocking him down. The one who owned the shuttle started to laugh, but the poor little tenter had started to cry, for he didn't know what he was supposed to have done wrong and why he was being clouted. Dick Smith went to Fred for his shuttle and explained that the other lad was not to blame, for it had come from his loom, on the other side of the alley. Both of the weavers gave the tenter a penny each.