Life's no drag for smoky Harry, 90
GENETICS are the secret of long life, according to a Valley 90-year-old.

Harry Pollard celebrated his 90th birthday with fellow residents at Abbeycroft Nursing Home, Loveclough, and said his mother had also enjoyed a long life.

And Harry, who was born in nearby Goodshawfold Lane in 1912, believes 70 years of smoking have had no adverse effect on his health.

He said: 'I have always liked a cigarette but I don't inhale it. There was no fuss when I started smoking. You could walk upstairs on a bus and you did not need your own cigarette – you could breathe in everyone else’s smoke.'

Harry, who enjoyed dances in his youth and often travelled to Blackpool – where a return to ticket and entrance to the Empress Ballroom cost 2s6d – says an increase in theft and a lack of courtesy among people have been major changes in his lifetime.

'The 1930s and ‘40s were wonderful times,’ he added.

Harry’s earliest memories include shackled horses and tradesmen spinning plates in Crawshawbooth centre. A soldiers' and sailors' benevolent fund paid for his education at Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School after his father was killed in First World War action.

Harry was married to Lena for 63 years until her death in December. The couple had one daughter, Jennifer, who died when eight-months-old in 1945.

Harry, who lived in the Waterfoot area throughout his marriage, counts his and Lena's 60 years of work for Whitewell Bottom Methodist Church as an important part of their lives.