

Prospect, Providence, Perseverance

Words & music: Keith Marsden

C F C F C F G
Fifty years man and boy have I worked the mills, though I never could stand the place
C F C F C F G
But I got to the top by my own bootstraps, and not 'cause they liked my face
C F C F C F G
And I made a good life for my child and wife – I'd respect from my fellow men
C G F C G C
But the gaffer's giving me the gold watch next week, and he'll never see me again!

CHORUS: C G C
Prospect, Providence, Perseverance, Albert, Valley, and Crank
G F C G
I passed my time in the dust and grime, with never a word of thanks
C G C
Oh, the wages were low and the hours were long, and the gaffers was hard, lads, hard
G F G (pause) F G C
But the last time's coming, thank God, coming soon, when I'll walk up the damned mill yard!

C F C F C F G
There'll be no more sweating on a seek-oil dam through the heat of a summer's day
C F C F C F G
There'll be no more choking on the rag'ole dust, there'll be no more fratching for pay
C F C F C F G
There'll be no more trying to mend a clapped-out loom, where the noise makes you climb the walls
C G F C G C
There'll be no more measuring the gaffer's boots by the seat of your overalls! **CHORUS**

C F C F C F G
There'll be no more bawling of a weaver out when a piece makes the menders grieve
C F C F C F G
"Oh, my shuttles were all cracked so I'd too many traps, and the weft wasn't fit to weave"
C F C F C F G
Then the spinner finds fault with the willyer's blend, who says that his rags were too cheap.
C G F C G C
And the blame gets passed right down the line, 'til the gaffer goes and kicks the sheep! **CHORUS**

C F C F C F G
Though the pension's small I've a bit put by that'll do for the wife and me
C F C F C F G
And there'll be enough spare for the odd glass of beer and a few days by the sea
C F C F C F G
And I'll roll a few Woods and I'll still find time for the jobs that I used to shirk
C G F C G C
I'll have so much on that I'll wonder then, how I ever found time to work! **CHORUS**

C F C F C F G
Though the pension's low still the prices rise, my wife's going out of her mind
C F C F C F G
And I'm no longer sure what it's all been for, the year long, lifelong grind
C F C F C F G
And I'd dust so long that my lungs have gone, and I cannot get my breath
C G F C G C
I can't laugh or talk or even walk, and I long for the peace of death... **CHORUS**

Prospect, Providence, Perseverance

Keith Marsden

VERSE

1. Fif-ty years man and boy have I worked the mills, though I nev-er could stand the place But I
got to the top by my own boot-straps — not 'cause they liked my face. And I
made a good life for my child and wife — I'd re-spect for my fel-low men. But the
gaf-fer's giv-ing me the gold watch next week, and he'll nev-er see me a - gain!

CHORUS

Pros-pect, Prov-i-dence, Per-sev-ere-ance, Al-bert, Val-ley, and Crank.
I passed my time in the dust and the grime with nev-er a word of thanks. Oh, the
wag-es were low and the hours were long, and the gaf-fers was hard, lads, hard. But the
last time's com-ing, thank God, com-ing soon, when I'll walk up the damned mill yard!

2. There'll be no more sweating on a seek-oil dam through the heat of a summer's day
There'll be no more choking on the rag'ole dust, there'll be no more fratching for pay
There'll be no more trying to mend a clapped-out loom, where the noise makes you climb the walls
There'll be no more measuring the gaffer's boots by the seat of your overalls! CHORUS
3. There'll be no more bawling of a weaver out when a piece makes the menders grieve
"Oh, my shuttles were all cracked so I'd too many traps, and the weft wasn't fit to weave"
Then the spinner finds fault with the willyer's blend, who says that his rags were too cheap
And the blame gets passed right down the line, 'til the gaffer goes and kicks the sheep! CHORUS
4. Though the pension's small I've a bit put by that'll do for the wife and me
And there'll be enough spare for the odd glass of beer and a few days by the sea
And I'll roll a few Woods and I'll still find time for the jobs that I used to shirk
I'll have so much on that I'll wonder then, how I ever found time to work! CHORUS

5. Though the pension's low still the prices rise, my wife's going out of her mind
And I'm no longer sure what it's all been for, the year long, lifelong grind
And I'd dust so long that my lungs have gone, and I cannot get my breath
I can't laugh or talk or even walk, and I long for the peace of death...

CHORUS: Prospect, Providence, Perseverance, Albert, Valley, and Crank
I've spent my time in the dust and the grime with never a word of thanks
Though the wages were low and the hours were long and the gaffers was hard, lads, hard
But the last time's coming, thank God, coming soon,
When I'll walk up the damned mill yard!



Inside the Prospect Mill, 1936

Keith Marsden (1939-1991) was born in the West Yorkshire town of Morley, which throughout the 19th century was a major centre for the production of woven woollen textiles. The six mills mentioned in the song were all located in Morley.

The song relates the true story of Marsden's friend, Henry Atkinson, who started work in the mill at fourteen years of age, and worked his way up to becoming the mill manager. Shortly after his retirement Henry died of emphysema which he'd contracted after prolonged exposure to the dust-laden air of the mill.



Keith Marsden (1939-1991)