

Old Liverpool

Written in manuscript by Rev Richard Postance MA, 1889

Illustrations by John Sanders

Internet version transcribed by William Bramhill, 2003



Introduction by William Bramhill

The book "Old Liverpool" was published in 1889 as a brief history "containing interesting and reliable information" about the Liverpool of bygone days. It was stipulated that benefits accruing from the sale of the book were to be given to the funds of St Paul's Church, Prince's Park.

The copy of the book from which this transcript is taken belongs to my oldest brother, Liverpool-born Frank Laurence Bramhill. It includes a letter dated Dec 18 1944 from the artist John Sanders to a Mr Fearon. The link between the two men was a Mr H.N. Humphreys, Art Director of the Borough of Bootle, Fearon's stepson, and an associate of Sanders. The front of the book is inscribed "With John Sanders' kind regards".

What fascinates me about Old Liverpool is the fact that it is a first-hand description of the city by someone who lived there at a time of great change. Postance clearly remembers, or talked to people who recalled, the city as he describes it; he also delved into histories like Herdman's "Ancient Liverpool", Picton's "Memorials", Enfield's "Liverpool", Brooke's "Ancient Liverpool", "The Streets of Liverpool" by James Stonehouse, and Dr Blower's "Mersey Ancient and Modern".

Mr Sanders's pictures are drawn with the help and suggestions received from many pictures "kindly lent by friends", and from the excellent engravings in the histories above.

Through the glory and poverty of the city's rapid expansion, my family members, the Bramhills, the Unwins, the Mulveys, and the Kings, worked hard for their daily bread, and must have been familiar with the city as it grew into a jewel of Victorian England.

Please note that I have made every effort to trace the copyright holders of Old Liverpool, but without success. I am reproducing it primarily to help those involved in the studies of Local History and Genealogy. I am sure that both the Rev Postance and Mr Sanders would have been delighted that their small volume was being reproduced for people to share more than 110 years after first publication. I have been unable to locate St Paul's Church, Prince's Park, but if this book is of use in your study or researches, you may like to make a contribution to Liverpool Cathedral, marking its

centenary in 2004. You should send donations to The Hon Membership Secretary, The Friends of Liverpool Cathedral, Liverpool, L1 7AZ. For further information on the cathedral, visit www.liverpoolcathedral.org.uk or e-mail friends@liverpoolcathedral.org.uk.

*William Brambill
Colchester, Essex www.brambill.net
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My thanks to the officers and members of Liverpool and South West Lancs Family History Society for their help in tracing my family tree. I hope this work, in turn, helps others.

Liverpool, Leverpool, Litherpoole, Lyverpoole, Lyrpole, Lerpool, Livrepol, Leverpole, ... such are a few of the many ways in which the name of the good old Town has been turned and twisted. As to the etymology of the word, there is a great variety of opinions, some deriving the first part of the word from a bird called the Liver, or Lever, or Laver; others from the word "lither" or lower, as distinguished from "Hireton" or Highertown (Everton); others from the word lithe or bending, ie, the bending-pool; others from the family name of Lever, others from a species of sea-weed (liverwort) found in the neighbourhood. From these and other derivations our reader may take any one they may choose. As to the second portion of the name, we may reasonably suppose that "pool" means pool, though it is strange that the harbour and stream to which the town owes a part of its name now no longer exist; they have passed away with nearly all the traces of Old Liverpool. The ancient water-course is sketched out on the first page. The first dock was made at the mouth of the pool at the beginning of the eighteenth century and in 1826, according to the "Annals". the old dock was closed, to be filled up for the erection of the present Custom House and Post Office: since then there has been a marvellous development of the Dock system, of which more later on.

The Tower of Liverpool, which stood at the bottom of Water Street (formerly called Bancke street), has a strange eventful history, of which the earliest part is very obscure. In the reign of Henry IV it seems to have come into the possession of Sir John Stanley, who in 1404 asked permission "to fortify his house at Leverpull". For many generations it remained as the sea-side stronghold of the Stanleys, and a convenient point of embarkation to their lordship in the Isle of Man, which was granted to Sir John after the battle of Shrewsbury. In 1552 we have accounts of Lord Derby maintaining 250 Liverpool residents, and feeding 60 old people daily, and entertaining visitors in the Tower three times weekly. During the siege of Liverpool in 1644 the Tower was used as the headquarters of the Parliamentarians, and after the surrender of the Town, Prince Rupert used both Tower and Castle for his soldiers and prisoners of war.

In 1737 the Tower passed in to the hands of the Corporation of Liverpool, by who it was converted into a Gaol for the imprisonment of war-prisoners, criminals and debtors. It was however very ill-suited for the purpose, and very badly conducted: its cells were filthy and unwholesome, its surrounding close and unhealthy, and so lax was the discipline that scenes of disorder and depravity were of frequent occurrence. John Edward, the philanthropist, visited the place in 1775 and gave it a very bad character. he saw it again in 1779 and 1782, and although he found some improvement, he expressed his great satisfaction on hearing that the Corporation were contemplating the erection of a new Gaol. The Tower was finally and completely demolished in 1819, and warehouses were erected on its site. In 1856 the warehouses were taken down and the Offices, called "Tower Buildings." were constructed so that of the old Liverpool Tower, nothing but the name survives.

Passing from Water Street to Dale Street, we come to a real old Liverpool thoroughfare, once very narrows, and more than once widened: it was irregularly build and contained all sorts and conditions of houses, shops, taverns and inns. it was one of the four principal Streets of the Town, proceeding

from the "High Cross" which stood near the present Town hall. The Crosses, one of the leading families of the place long ago, had a fine house in the Street, called the "Crosse Hall" with gardens extending to the Pool stream. Mr Shaw, the potter, had his works and dwelling house at the corner of Fontenoy Street: after him was named old "Shaw's Brow" now so greatly changed since the erection of Brown's Library and Museum, and other buildings more recently added.

Up to the year 1760 there was no coach road into Liverpool, but in that year, the new turnpike road to Prescot was completed (see map first page), and the first Stage-coach started with passengers from the Golden Fleece in Dale Street. Previous to that date, goods were carried by Canal and on horseback, and long lines of pack horses, laden with goods, issued forth periodically from Dale Street to the interior. Passengers to London had to take horse and make their way to Warrington, whence coaches started twice a week to the Metropolis, occupying three days on the journey; the fare was two guineas. The coaches which afterwards started from Liverpool, ran through to London, making the journey generally in two days in summer, and three days in winter, leaving the "Golden Fleece" on the morning of Tuesday and Friday. Passengers very frequently carried arms, so as to be prepared for possible highwaymen. Other inns in Dale Street were the "Golden Lion", the "Angel and Crown", the "Bull and Punch-Bowl", the "Wool-pack", and the "Red Lion".

Lime Street, which at the beginning of this century, was literally nowhere, has, since the opening of Lime St Station, the building of St George's Hall and other noble edifices, been transformed into one of the busiest and finest thoroughfares in the Province. In old days it was the scene of much disorder and brutality, as it was the resort of the roughs of the town for cock-fighting, dog-fighting and prize-fighting. It was once called the "Limekilne Lane" from the limeworks which stood on the site of the Railway Station. The fumes from these works were supposed to be prejudicial to the patients in the old Infirmary, and the kilns were removed to the North Shore. The Infirmary, erected in 1745, stood on part of the land now occupied by St George's Hall. There were rope works between Lime St and Clayton Square, and on the east side of the Street, rope-walks and wind-mills. The Blind Asylum and Church were erected at the London Road end, but as the land on which the Church stood, was required for the enlargement of the Station in 1850, the whole institution was re-built in Hardman Street, the Church itself being removed and re-erected stone by stone. When the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was first opened, the terminus was in Crown Street and passengers were brought in and out of Town by coach: in 1836 the tunnel was completed, and the Station opened: since then, the Station has been improved, enlarged and re-built, and the old Station front has given place to the North Western Hotel. St John's Churchyard was consecrated as a cemetery in 1767, though St John's Church was not completed till 1784. It is now entirely overshadowed by St George's Hall. The first stone of this majestic Hall was laid on the coronation day of Queen Victoria, June 18, 1838, and was opened Sept 12, 1854.

Lord Street was at one time a portion of the orchard belonging to the Castle, which stood upon the ground occupied by St George's Church. (see picture and description of the Castle)., A lane ran through the orchard, leading to a ferry across the pool stream which flowed from the Moss Lake Fields, and after a circuitous route, made its way to the river via Byrom Street, Whitechapel (formerly called Frog Lane), Paradise St, and the Customs House. There were a few cottages in Lord Lane

occupied by some of the Castle retainers. During the siege (1644), these few houses were nearly all demolished, and the buildings of a better class were erected. In 1672, Lord Molyneux constructed a bridge over the pool at the bottom of Lord St (the called Lord Molyneux Street). The Molyneux family built a mansion on the side of the site of the present Commerce Court, when the Castle was no longer habitable. The Street itself, like all the old streets, was exceedingly narrow, two carriages could scarcely pass, and indeed in those old days of sedan chairs, carriages were very few: no Street opened into Lord St throughout its whole length till 1777k when John St was opened out from Harrington St and was continued across the road into Cable St. Lord St towards the end of the last century gradually extended eastward; consequently, the narrowness of the Street was a very great drawback to business and traffic, and in 1826 an Act was obtained for increasing its width fourfold: this and other improvements in the immediate neighbourhood were carried out at a cost of about £170,000. Church Street increased in importance with Lord St. The Church which gave it its name was consecrated in 1704, Liverpool having become a Parish, separate from Walton, in 1699. St Peter's was a second Parish Church and a second Rector was appointed, the living being in the gift of the council. This arrangement was subsequently altered, the advowson was sold by the Corporation in 1838, and not long afterwards there was but one Rector for the two Parish Churches. The Blue-Coat School was founded in 1709, and in a hose next to it, the first Milner's safes were manufactured. Church Street was paved in 1760, and the side-walks flagged in 1816. Bold Street was built upon in 1785, but for many years contained only private houses.

Castle Street is one of the old Liverpool streets, and owing to its central position, between the old Castle and the old High Cross, it has been the scene of very many of the most important events in the history of the old town. It was of course very Nat tow at one time, about the width of Cable St., and was widened in 1786. The market for corn and other produce used to be held under the old Town Hall, which was built upon arches. When the Castle was demolished, the market was held in the open space called Derby Square, but as the business of the town increased, and the market in Castle St became very inconvenient, St John's Market was built and opened in 1822. St James' Market was built in 1827.

The first Liverpool newspapers were published in Castle St, namely "Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser," which appeared on May 28 1756, and "Gore's General Advertiser," first published in 1765. There was however, according to "Brooke's Ancient Liverpool," a newspaper called the Leverpoole Courant" published as early as 1712. Gore's Liverpool Directory was first issued in 1766 and has been continued ever since, growing in size with the increasing population. Brunswick Street was opened out in 1790; it is the centre of the Liverpool corn trade, which was carried on opposite the Town Hall until 1803: the Corn Exchange was erected soon afterwards, but greatly increased trade necessitated larger premises, and the new Corn Exchange was opened in 1854. St George's Church, at the south end of Castle Street, was built in 1734, on the site of the Castle, it has however been almost entirely re-built.

St Nicholas' Church, which used to be called the "Church of Our Lady and St Nicholas," bears the very appropriate title of "the Old Church". The original structure was a chapel of ease to the mother Church at Walton until Liverpool was made a separate Parish in 1699. The Church has from time to time been subjected to many alterations, improvements and re-constructions, and

the Church-yard as we all know, has not been left intact, since the filling up of the George's Dock Basin and the carrying out of other improvements. In 1725 a new peal of six bells, cast in Bristol, was put up in the tower, this peal was however superseded by a very fine set of twelve bells which were cast in 1813. In 1750, the old tower had a new spire erected upon it, and in 1774 the body of the Church was re-built. On Sunday, Feb. 11, 1810, a deplorable calamity happened: the spire, which had been built upon the old tower, fell into the Church, just as the children of the Moorfields Charity School were proceeding up the aisle. Twenty children and three adults were killed upon the spot, and many others injured: the Rector and his Curate, who were entering the Church at the time, had a most miraculous escape. In 1815 the present lantern tower was erected. Some curious inscriptions have been traced in the Churchyard: one tombstone record the death of Robert Broadneux, who died aged 109 years: he lay down to die when upward of four score years old, and had his coffin made, but as he lived on for more than a quarter of a century, the ghastly piece of furniture was kept in his bed-room until his death. Another tombstone to the memory of Richard Blore, 1789, moralizes thus:-
"This town's a corporation full of crooked streets,
"Death is the market place, where all men meets:
"If life was merchandise that men could buy,
"The rich would always live, the poor would die."

The Customs' duties of Liverpool used to be received at the old Town Hall in High Street, and when this building was taken down in 1675, the old Custom House was erected at the bottom of Water Street, on the opposite side to the Tower, a space being left between the river and the Custom House for the reception of merchandise. The river in those days, before the reclaiming of land for Docks and Quays, flowed right up to St Nicholas' Church Yard, to the foot of the present Tower Buildings, and the east side of the back Goree.

This old Custom House was a curious little place, more like a fisherman's cottage than a public building, but it served its purpose for a few years, and remained standing until about 1780, when the Goree warehouses were erected on its site. These warehouses were destroyed by a terrible conflagration in 1802, great clouds of smoke and sparks being carried for miles across the country: the fire smouldered, it is said, for three months, and the amount of loss was estimated at £323,000. When the little cottage Custom House was found to be too small and inconvenient for the increasing business of the port, a more suitable building was chosen and adapted for the purpose on the quay of the new Dock, afterwards called the Custom House Dock and subsequently the "old dock". The building belonged to Sylvester Moorcroft (who was mayor in 1706), and stood on the east side of the Dock, near the site of the Sailors' Home. It was a neat brick building faced with stone, and with the Royal arms carved in stone in front: there was a flight of steps at the entrance, which led to an open lobby or piazza, above which was the "long room" for the transaction of Customs business; behind the building was a spacious yard with suitable warehouses. This Custom House was pulled down in 1837 – a side view of it is seen in the picture of the "old Dock". The present Custom house occupies the site of the "Old Dock", which was filled up for the purpose. This noble pile of buildings consists of a centre surmounted by a dome, on either side of which are two extensive wings in which are various departments in connection with the Excise, Dock estate and Post Office, the latter having been removed from "Post-office Place", Church St.

Park Lane was formerly a horse road, leading to Toxteth Park and commenced at the ferry at the foot of South Castle Street, then Water Lane; a hundred years ago, there were no houses in or about Blundell Street; Norfolk Street terminated at Simpson Street, and from there, beautiful green fields sloped down to the South Shore! A mill and dam stood near the bottom of Stanhope Street, quite in the open country. Toxteth Park, now so densely populated, was in the early part of the present century, entirely agricultural, a few houses, farm dwellings, market-gardeners' cottages, etc, were scattered over the landscape, through which ran the Park Road to Aigburth and Garston. Nor far from St James' Church, which was built in 1774-1775, was the great quarry between Parliament Street and Duke Street, from which the stone was obtained for many of the Public Buildings of Liverpool. In 1829, the quarry became St James' Cemetery, where, in the following year, were laid the mortal remains of the Right Honourable William Huskisson, MP for the Borough, who met with a fatal accident, at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, Sept 15, 1830. Near where the Cemetery Chapel now stands, was an old windmill, and two others stood at the Parliament Street end of the quarry. Flowing from the rock on the east side, a little spring of water was discovered which has ever since been supposed to contain valuable medicinal properties. St James' Mount was constructed in 1767: it was the outcome of the benevolence of a Mr Thomas Johnson, Mayor of Liverpool at the time, who, during a winter of terrible severity, relieved the distress of the people by employing large numbers of men to form this artificial hill and to lay out the Mount Gardens. This promenade originally went by the name of "Mount Zion".

Near the highest part of Park Road stood an old road-side Inn, a quaint looking structure with an unknown history and of uncertain age, which bore the name of the "Peacock Tavern". Further along the road was the "Pine Apple Tavern and Bowling Green", which many will remember as the terminus of a line of omnibuses, and a favourite place of resort. It was originally a farm-house, with farm lands of very considerable dimensions, but now streets of small dwelling-house property are built upon its acres, and this portion of old Toxteth Park is fast losing every trace of the picturesque. "The Peacock" and "The Pine Apple" are no more — they have fallen before the devastating march of population to the South, just as northward, the once beautiful and aristocratic Everton, the "Clifton" of Liverpool, with its fine suburban residences, its old fashioned row of cottages and the renowned Toffee Shop on the Brow, has been transformed into a densely peopled district, extending to Walton Church and beyond it.

At the extreme end of Park Road stands a plain stone building, with graveyard attached, called the Ancient Chapel of Toxteth Park. Although never regularly consecrated, it is said to have been at one time used by a Church of England congregation.

In the time of Cromwell it was a Dissenting Place of Worship, and after the Restoration it was not affected by the Act of Uniformity, but continued to be occupied by Nonconformists. It was re-built in 1774, and in 1777 a secession took place; owing to dissatisfaction at the appointment of a Minister of unorthodox views: this led to the erection of Newington Chapel in Renshaw Street, now used as the German Church. In the year 1811 a very remarkable man was appointed to the pastorate of Newington Chapel, the Rev Thomas Spence, who was born in 1791; his popularity as a preacher was so great that a larger Chapel had to be found to accommodate the crowds who flocked to hear him, and Great George Street Chapel was forthwith commenced. Unfortunately however Mr Spence was drowned whilst bathing, before the building was completed, and thus a most promising career was

cut short at its very outset. The Rev Thomas Raffles (afterwards D.D.) succeeded him, and so marked was the esteem in which he was held as a preacher and public man for fifty years, that his name will always be remembered amongst the great and good men of our City, and the Chapel in which he ministered so long and so faithfully, will probably be known for many years to come by the name which has by common consent been given to it for many years past – “Raffles’ Chapel”. The Ancient Chapel of Toxteth, from which this congregation originally seceded, has been since used by the Unitarian body.

But to return to old Liverpool – to the very centre of commercial activity – the place where merchants most do congregate. The Town Hall, which was commenced in 1748 was intended to answer the double purpose of a Town Hall and Exchange, but the merchants chose to transact their business in the open air and met at the end of Castle Street, opposite “Gore’s”, now Mawdesleys, where they held “High Change”. From all accounts it seems that the old dome of the Town Hall was not an elegant structure, and was destroyed by fire, with the interior of the building, on Sunday Jan 18, 1795, the destruction being all the more complete in consequence of the scarcity of water owing to the frost. The work of restoration was promptly and rapidly proceeded with, the interior was re-arranged, the new dome and the figure of Britannia were put up in 1802., and the portico in the front was added in 1811, the pillars of the latter are each of one stone, obtained not from the great quarry in St James’ Road, but from a fine quarry of excellent stone on the east side of Rathbone Street; the great rough-hewn blocks were carried down to Castle Street, where they were shaped and dressed. The splendid suite of State apartments and the ball-room were completed in 1820. While, however, the new Town Hall was sufficiently commodious, elegant and suitable for its purpose, the necessity for a new Exchange became more and more pressing, and the “Exchange Buildings Scheme” was projected, the shares were rapidly taken up, and in 1808, the merchants assembled on the “flags” at the rear of the newly restored Town Hall, and forsook their old place of meeting in Castle Street. The Nelson monument, with the well-known motto “England expects every man to do his duty” was erected directly after decisive victory of Trafalgar, and the death of Admiral Lord Nelson. For little more than fifty years, these old Exchange Buildings were found sufficient for the business men of Liverpool: in the mean time, however, commercial enterprise had not been at a stand-still; rapid progress and development were the order of the day and new Exchange Buildings were regarded as a necessity. In 1862 a new Exchange Company was formed to buy up the old Company and to erect the present magnificent series of business premises and the spacious News-room. Although from an architectural point of view, there are many who profess a preference for the old Exchange, yet it must be admitted that few of the world’s Market-places can compare with the Court-yard of our Town Hall, where day by day is to be seen the concentration of the marvellous business enterprise and activity of the City of Liverpool.

TO write the history of the Liverpool docks would be to tell the whole story of the rise and progress of the town. As, however, it is impossible here to give an account of all the docks, it may be interesting to notice the oldest, and to refer to some of the newest. As long ago as 1561, a shelter for the shipping, consisting of massive stone piers, was erected at the mouth of the pool, but it was not until 1709 that the first Dock Act was passed : soon afterwards, the first Liverpool Dock (and, in fact, the first in the kingdom, was completed : it was 195 yards long, with an irregular width of 80 to 95 yards. In 1826 it was filled up to make a site for the new Revenue Buildings. The Salthouse Dock, so

called from the salt works on the east side of it, was opened in 1753, it was originally called the South Dock. The next was the George's, or North Dock, which was commenced in 1762 and opened in 1771. It was enlarged and almost entirely re-constructed early in the present century, and re-opened in 1825. The George's pier and slip was the point of arrival and departure of various packets and ferry boats.

Rapidly increasing trade soon demanded further accommodation, and an Act was passed in 1785 authorizing the construction of two more Docks, south of the Salthouse, called the King's (opened 1788) and the Queen's (opened 1796). Both these Docks have been since re-constructed and enlarged. The King's Dock tobacco warehouse was erected in 1795 on the east side, but afterwards very much larger warehouses were built on the west side. The Prince's Dock was opened, July 19, 1821, the coronation day of George IV. The Dock Estate then extended gradually north and south. The last important Act was obtained in 1873, to meet the requirements of steam-ships of vastly increased size and tonnage; the estimate for these new schemes being £4,100,000. the new Docks at the north end comprised the Langton half-tide, two graving-docks, the Langton Branch, the Alexandra and its three branches, and the Hornby Dock. This extensive addition to the Dock accommodation was opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales on Sept 8, 1881. The new works at the South end included the enlargement of the Herculeum Dock, with its graving-docks, and the completion of the whole series between the Brunswick Dock and the Dingle. There are in Liverpool sixty docks and basins, with a water area of 360 acres, length of quay berthing 25 miles and a frontage to the river of more than six miles. The number of graving-docks belonging to the Board is 21; and the total area of the Estate is 1078 acres. The Liverpool Estate also extends to the Birkenhead side, the docks there, in an incomplete state, having been purchased and finished by the Liverpool Dock Board. This portion of the estate comprises an area of 506 acres, with water space of 164.5 acres, and a lineal quayage of over 9 miles. There are 3 graving-docks on this side belonging to the Board. [Much of the above information has been gathered from a paper by G.F. Lyster Esq (Dock Engineer) which was kindly placed at the disposal of the writer of these pages.]

IN the year in which the first Dock Act was passed, 1709, the Blue-Coat Hospital was founded by Mr Bryan Blundell, who gave large sums of money at various times for the benefit of this charity, in which he and his family took so deep and lasting an interest. At first it was only a day charity school, but it was soon found desirable to enlarge its scope, to undertake the entire care of the children, and to take a kindly interest in them in after life. The present building was erected in 1717, but it has since been much altered and improved: the front facing School Lane presents much the same appearance as it originally did. The Sunday afternoon Service in the Chapel, to which the public are admitted, is of a most interesting character, and is sufficient evidence in itself of the thoroughness of the instruction given, and the excellent discipline maintained.

Liverpool Castle is generally supposed to have been built by Roger de Poitiers about the year 108, though in "Picton's Memorials" we find this surmise contradicted on what appear to be very reasonable grounds, and the opinion is expressed that "the Castle was built by King John, at the time when he founded the borough and port," (about 1206). The Castle occupied the site of St George's Church but covered a much larger area, embracing the open space at the top of Lord St, it was surrounded by strong battlemented walls with four round towers with battlements; the principal

entrance was on the north side facing Castle St, a tower being on each side, and a drawbridge to the gate. The whole fortification was enclosed within a wide and deep fosse or moat, cut in the solid rock round the Castle. portions of the foundations of the towers, and parts of the moat, have been discovered at various times, in making excavations for buildings. In 1421 Sir Richard Molyneaux of Sefton was made Constable of the Castle, and the office remained hereditary in the family. The building sustained some injury during the siege in 1644, and was captured and occupied by Prince Rupert, who approached it by way of Castle St. Shortly afterwards, an Act was passed for the demolition of the Castle, but this was not immediately done, as later on it was used as a residence, and afterwards degenerated into a refuge for idle persons, who became a nuisance and were ejected by the Corporation, a portion of it was also used as a bridewell. When Liverpool was made a separate Parish in 1699, and two Rectors were appointed, it seems they took up their abode within the Castle walls, and refused to surrender to the Corporation. They gave up possession however in 1715, and the Corporation agreed to build tow houses for them by way of compensation. The walls and ruins of the dismantled Castle were pulled down and removed in 1721.

⚓ hundred years ago, “crossing the water” was a serious and risky undertaking; the ferry boats for the accommodation of passengers were small and inconvenient, and the ferry houses were quite in keeping with them. There were ferries at Woodside, Lower Tranmere, Seacombe, Rock Ferry, New Ferry & Eastham, and the most usual place for landing on the Liverpool side was the George’s pier. passengers were conveyed in small boats of five or six tons burden with accommodation for about fifteen people, and it is easy to imagine that in boisterous weather, and with a strong tide running, the voyage was at times a perilous one. The first steam ferry boat to cross the Mersey was a strange looking craft called the “Etna”, which commenced the run in 1817. It was a kind of double boat, with one paddle-wheel in the middle. Although this vessel was a great advance upon the old ferry boats, the dangers of embarking and landing passengers were not diminished, as at low tide the steamer could not come alongside the steps and small boats had to be used. This dangerous and inconvenient landing was a source of frequent complaints, and at length a “gut” was made into which the steamers ran and landed their passengers on a slip, which was only a little less disagreeable than the steps, and accidents, more or less serious, were of frequent occurrence. The next move was the construction of a small stage running in and out of a tunnel: according to the state of the tide. This landing stage difficulty was at length solved by the building of the George’s floating stage in 1847 by the Dock Board at a cost of £60,000; it was 500 feet long and 80 feet wide. The rapid increase of traffic, and the necessity of further accommodation for all kinds of passenger steamers led to the construction of the Prince’s landing-stage by the Dock Board, at a cost of £120,000, it was 1002 feet long and 80 feet wide. The stages were connected with the quays of the river wall by means of hinged girder bridged, so as to rise and fall with the tide. The two landing-stages were united in 1873-4, and formed a magnificent promenade deck, 1060 feet in length; the total cost of the whole structure, with the improved bridges and approaches, being £373,000. Shortly after its completion, it was, to every one’s amazement, destroyed by fire, July 28, 1874. The fire originated beneath the flooring where some of the men were at work, and owing to the highly inflammable nature of the timber, which had been saturated with creosote, the efforts of the firemen were absolutely useless: the fire could not be reached, and nearly every portion of the stage was ruined, the loss being about £250,000. The work of reconstruction was soon proceeded with, and the Landing-stage was, in a very short time, once more ready for its enormous traffic.

ON the page opposite [wb: above in web version] is a view in London Road: this is comparatively a modern Street although it was one of the ancient ways out of Liverpool. It used to be called "the way to Warrington", and was traversed by strings of pack-horses, as up to the middle of the last century there was no coach road out of Liverpool, the nearest coach town being Warrington (see Dale St). As soon as the road was made, and the coaches ran through to Liverpool, London Road became an important and crowded thoroughfare. In the early part of the present century there were no houses between the corner of Stafford Street and Commutation Row; at the corner of Norton Street stood the old "Blue Bell Inn", a recognised stopping place for the Liverpool coaches. In and near this locality, several traces have been discovered of the entrenchments and other military works and relics connected with the celebrated siege of Liverpool by Prince Rupert, who took the town by assault, June 1664. One of the most conspicuous objects in the neighbourhood is the Statue of King George iii which was erected by public subscription, though funds did not come in as readily as could be desired. The first stone for the pedestal was laid in Great George Square garden on Oct 25th 1809, being the fiftieth anniversary of King George's accession to the throne. In 1822 it was decided to alter the site to London Road, and there the figure was set up, but the monument was not completed until the following year.

WE are drawing near to the end of our short story, and yet how much there is to tell! So many and so great are the changes through which Liverpool has passed since those early days in her history when the "Pool" was her harbour and the Castle her most prominent feature; since the "High Cross" stood in her Market-place, and the "White Cross" at the corner of Oldhall Street; since the "Everton Cross", which took the form of a sun-dial, stood at the top of the town in a line with Everton Road; since the Everton Beacon Tower held its commanding position, where St George's Church now stands; since the "stocks" stood in front of St Peter's Church, and by the old Parish Church of Walton. Since those days, Liverpool has extended far away north, south, and east, there are now houses, houses, everywhere, even where but a very few years ago, we used to take our walks abroad into the country, through fields and lanes and villages. Fortunately for the people, the town is not without its "lungs"; but the crowded state of the Parks, especially during the summer months, is evidence enough that they are neither too many nor too large; they are moreover a considerable distance from the great mass of the town-toilers who have to be content with the relief and refreshment afforded by the carefully tended green of a few squares and grave-yards. In fact the greater part of Liverpool is painfully new, and to hear her called the "good old town" sounds something like a misnomer. The relics of "Old Liverpool" are being gradually crowded out and at the present rate of the process of destruction, the time is not far distant when the antiquarian will have to depend entirely upon books and pictures for the objects of his research. Many and great changes have taken place in Liverpool ancient and modern; what further changes may take place it is difficult to prophesy, let us hope, however, that all changes will be for her greater prosperity, and the welfare of her people. Without doubt there is at the present time a strong tendency in favour of more light, more room, more air for the people, and more facilities for all manner of physical, mental and moral improvement. May the best hopes of her true sons be realized!

On the opposite page [wb: above in web version] is a view familiar to all Liverpool people – it is the Liverpool of to-day. Were all its history told, it would be a strange story of profit and loss, success and disaster, wealth and poverty, virtue and vice, philanthropy and degradation, culture and ignorance, religious activity and heathendom. Truly Liverpool has much wherein she may rejoice, but much cause also for shame and humiliation. She has been named the “black spot on the Mersey” and though this evil repute is not the result altogether of her own black deeds, but rather from the fact of her being the “meeting place of the nations”, yet it is greatly to be desired that this reproach should be for ever rolled away. Our desire in preparing the foregoing pages has been simply to gather together a few facts in a small compass, which may be useful and interesting to Liverpool people especially, and to give some idea of the old buildings which have been swept away by modern enterprise and progress.

Apology is offered, if need be, for the informal and gossiping manner in which the information is given; we hope that inaccuracies will not be found very numerous and that many readers, for whom the more complete and costly works on the subject are difficult of access, may derive pleasure and profit from the perusal of this little work on

“Old Liverpool”

- *An example of the original manuscript used in the 40-page brochure, Old Liverpool*

This little book was intended in the first instance merely to advertise a Sale of Work, called “Old Liverpool”, in aid of St Barnabas’ Church. It was thought, however, that it might serve a more useful purpose if issued as a brief history containing interesting and reliable information about the Liverpool of by-gone days.

The first edition being out of print, it has been suggested that there may be some modern readers interested in the ancient story of Liverpool, to whom the information and illustrations contained in this little brochure might be found useful and interesting. A second edition has therefore been published and it is hoped that it may make a wide appeal to lovers of “Old Liverpool”.

The benefits accruing from the sale of this book are to be given to the funds of St Paul’s Church, Prince’s Park.

The author, the Rev Richard Postance, is indebted for many of the related facts to Herdman’s “Ancient Liverpool”, Picton’s “Memorials”, Enfield’s “Liverpool”, Brooke’s “Ancient Liverpool”, “The Streets of Liverpool”, by James Stonehouse, Dr Blower’s “Mersey Ancient and Modern” etc.

The Artist, Mr John Sanders, acknowledges the help and suggestions he has received for his drawings from many pictures, kindly lent by friends, and from the excellent engravings in some of the above-name Works.

Liverpool 1889

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