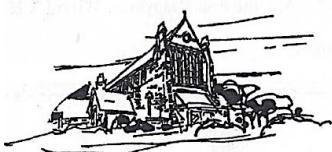


# St. Hildeburgh's *Dispatch*



No. 3.

27<sup>th</sup> April 2020

A fortnightly on-line paper to entertain all in lockdown during the Coronavirus pandemic



*Ye Ugly Face Clubb of Leverpoole, 1743.*



Members of the Ugly Club meeting at Williams's Tavern, Liverpool

Liverpudlians have long enjoyed a reputation for being able to laugh at themselves, so where else but Liverpool would you expect its citizens to form a club that only allowed entry to those who were downright ugly ? In 1887, the well-known Liverpool bookseller, Edward Howell, whose new and second-hand bookshop was located in Church Street, acquired an old and curious folio volume of manuscripts, being the minute book for a club that had existed in the town a century and a half earlier under the name of "*The Most Honourable and Facetious Society of Ugly Faces.*" The book contained a list of the Society's rules, a list of members (together with their qualifications), and annual statements of accounts for a period of eleven years, from the 15th January 1743, to the 21st January 1754. It is thought that the club was disbanded in November 1757. The thin folio volume also contained a register of attendances, and a record of proceedings. The club even had a motto : *Tetrum ante omnia vultum* – "Before all things, an ugly face."

Members included many of the town's chief merchants as well as a chaplain, a barber, four doctors, Army officers, a Surgeon Royal Navy (*HMS Expedition*), a lawyer, an architect, a doctor of music, and several ships' captains of Liverpool merchantmen. The Society had twenty amusing Rules, including for example, Rule 3 : "That a large mouth, thin jaws, blubber lips, little goggling or squinting eyes shall be esteemed considerable qualifications in a candidate." ; or Rule 5 : "That a large carbuncle, potatoe [sic] nose, shall have the preference of a Roman or King William's, and be esteemed the most honourable of any." A further requirement for membership was bachelorhood, and if a member was misguided enough to enter into the state of matrimony, Rule 11 laid down that he was obliged to forfeit 10/6d for Society funds. The most amusing aspect of Howell's manuscripts, however, lay in the "qualifications" of its members. To quote but a few :

*"Jos. Farmer, Mercht. – Little Eyes, one bigger than ye other ; Long nose. Thin Lanthorn Jaws. Large upper Lip. Mouth from Ear to Ear resembling a Shark's. A Rotten Sett of Irregular Teeth, wch are set off to great Advantage by frequent Laughing. His Visage long and narrow. His Looks upon the whole, extraordinary Haggard, Odd, Comic, and Out-of-ye-way. In Short, possessed of every Extraordinary Qualification to render him ye Phœnix of ye Society, as The Like won't appear again this 1000 Years."*

*"Mathew Strong, Merchant. – A Tawny Complexion, A Sharp Nose, A Flook Mouth, Irregular Bad Set of Teeth like those of an old worn-out comb thoroughly begrim'd. A Ghastly queer Grin & Countenance greatly set off by a Long Carotty [sic] Beard."*

*“Wm. Long, London. – Ragged Face, a very prominent large Nose, an extraordinary wide Mouth, no Upper Teeth, a large under Lip, a prodigious long chin, meeting his Nose like a Pair of Nutcrackers – an Extraordinary Member.”*

The latter shows that they recruited members further afield than Liverpool. Indeed, they had a member in Dublin, another at Leghorn, and even one in Jamaica – all evidence of Liverpool’s growing importance as a port. At least one member hailed from across the water in “Worral”. The chief occupation of the club and its members, it will be no surprise to learn, was eating and drinking. James Ashton D.D., was Chaplain to the Society, and they even had an official Barber – ugly of course – but why they required one is not made clear. There was also a number of Bell-Ringers, and it has been suggested that church bells were rung as the Club sat down for dinner. They occasionally “dined out” as there are entries in the book for “Dinners at Derby Chapel”, “Expenses at Chidwell,” [sic], the Exchange Coffee House (which became their headquarters), and Tom’s Coffee House. Meetings must have been great fun, and it was deemed a tremendous honour to be thought ugly enough to be accepted as a member.



The old Parish Church of Holy Trinity in 1939 from a sketch by John Pride.

# *As We Were : Hoylake in days gone by.*

*No. 2 : 1796*

In the second of our short series of views of Hoylake from across the centuries, we take an extract from a letter that first appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* for June 1796. This periodical was founded by Edward Cave in January 1731 and ran uninterrupted for almost 200 years until its final number in 1922. Letters to the journal were addressed to 'Sylvanus Urban', the pseudonym for Edward Cave.

"I am now writing to you, Mr. Urban, from the extreme point of the Hundred of Wirral in Cheshire, near the broad estuary of the Dee, and only seven miles from the confluence of the more commercial waters of the Mersey with the Ocean. Your last Magazine has noticed Miss Seward's poetical address to the proprietor of High Lake, some of the lines in which are, indeed, not less elegant than classically descriptive.

The Hoyle sand breaks the force of the waves, so as to render the lake a safe road for vessels of any size in the roughest weather ; and it is strictly true that 'age and infirmity may securely plunge' during the highest tides and most boisterous gales, such indeed, as we have lately experienced for a length of time, at this season exceedingly unusual. The hotel lately erected by Sir John Stanley, the lord of the manor, is situated within a few yards of the beach, and contains a variety of commodious apartments, both public and private, very comfortably furnished. The charges are very moderate, the table well and amply supplied, and nothing is wanting on the part of the persons who have the management of it to render this house as pleasant and convenient as can be desired. Although, at the first glance, we appear shut out from the rest of the world, a very short time conveys us to Parkgate (the station of the Dublin packets), across the water into Wales, into the bustle of Liverpool, or the less busy capital of this county. The coast of Flintshire, richly wooded, even to the waters edges, and singularly contrasting with this naked district, displays itself with great beauty on the other side of the Dee ; whilst the rugged mountains of Wales, boldly stretching out as far as Anglesey, form the boundary of the prospect towards the South West.

There is a great extent of fine, short turf along this coast, extending nearly to the Mersey, and affording very dry and pleasant walks and rides ; as does also the sand, which is firm and compact, and wholly destitute of

pebbles. This shore is protected by a chain of sand-hills, held together by the star-grass or sea-reed, whose long fibrous roots penetrating deep into the sands, offer a fixed point round which they may collect. This grass is under the especial protection of the law ; for if it were cut and converted to the uses of which it is capable, such as making mats and besoms, the sand-hills would quickly be blown away, and the country behind overwhelmed with a moving sand. The sand-hills are the resort of a very excellent breed of rabbits. The Dee affords abundance of fine salmon ; cockles, shrimps, soles, and various kinds of flat fish are taken on the sandbanks and in the lake ; and the Liverpool markets furnish an ample supply of the productions of animal and vegetable nature.

Every vessel that comes into or goes out of the Dee or Mersey is distinctly seen hence ; and the lake is frequently enlivened by brigs and schooners beating to windward, as well as by the anchorage of the Dublin packets, whose passengers are glad to partake of the amusements and refreshments which the hotel affords.

It is calculated for the inhabitants of the central counties, who, at no great distance from their own houses, will here find genteel society, good accommodation at reasonable prices, and one of the most commodious bathing places in the island. The lake is distinguished in the maps by the appellation of *Hoyle lake* ; but Sir John Stanley, having found it termed *High lake* in some old writings belonging to the estate, has desired it to be so printed in the advertisements relative to the establishment of the hotel, which was opened in 1793."

*Viator A. :-*

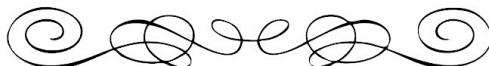


Hoylakejunction.com

The following advertisement, from the Liverpool *General Advertiser* of the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1796, throws further light on *The Royal Hotel* on Stanley Road (at the junction with Beach Road), at the time the above letter was written. The hotel was later the headquarters of the *Liverpool Hunt Club*, and after that, the original club house of the *Royal Liverpool Golf Club*. The hotel was demolished in 1958 and was said to have been haunted by a gentleman of the previous century who was frequently seen before vanishing.

## SEA BATHING High Lake, Cheshire.

R. BRETHERTON (late butler to Sir J. T. Stanley, Bart.) respectfully informs the public that his apartments at the Hotel continue at half-price till the first of June. After the month of April it is requested that persons wanting apartments would direct their letters to Neston, as they will come more regularly than by Liverpool. A terrace has lately been added to the Hotel, from which there is a fine view of the Lake, the Sea, the Lancashire Hills and Welsh Mountains, and of every ship which goes to and from Parkgate and Liverpool.



### SEA FISHERIES REGULATION ACT, 1888.

### Lancashire Sea Fisheries District.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that I, the undersigned, HENRY NOEL MALAN, being the person duly appointed for the purpose by the Board of Trade, will hold a Public Inquiry in the

MASONIC HALL, HOYLAKE,

On Wednesday, 13th May, 1891, at 12 noon,

into the following Bye-laws made under the above Act by the Local Fisheries Committee for the Lancashire Sea Fisheries District:

"No Person shall, except as hereinafter provided, "use in fishing for, taking, or attempting to take "Sea Fish within the Lancashire Sea Fisheries "District, any net having a mesh of less "dimensions than 1½ inches from knot to knot, "or seven inches measured round the mesh. "Such measurement to be made on each side of "the square when the net is coated or wet, and "no artifice shall be used to diminish practically "the mesh of the net."

"No trawl net shall be used with a beam of greater "length than 30 feet between the trawl heads or "irons (unless such trawl net is used exclusively "for taking shrimps and prawns)."

AND NOTICE IS HEREBY FURTHER GIVEN that at such Inquiry all persons interested in the subject will have an opportunity of being heard.

(Signed)

H. NOEL MALAN,

Inspector of Fisheries.

Fisheries Department,  
Board of Trade, Whitehall Gardens,  
29th April, 1891.

Printed by WATERLOW BROS. & LAYTON, LIMITED, LONDON. 4770-(50)-274-91

An official notice issued in 1891, announcing a Public Inquiry to be held in the Masonic Hall, Hoylake, for the benefit of local fishermen, requiring them to have nets restricted to a certain size.

Prior to the Act of 1888, under which this meeting was called, fishermen fished when and where they wished, and captured fish regardless of size or condition. Laws were in place protecting oysters, crabs, lobsters, game and salmon, but no law hitherto dealt effectually with the preservation of ordinary sea fish (particularly flat fish) resulting in enormous destruction of small ungrown fish, which was going on daily in all the fishing port and harbours of Great Britain, including Hoylake which had a significant fleet of fishing smacks centred around Hoose.

# Wirral Quiz

*How well do you know our Peninsular ?  
Test your knowledge with these ten questions.  
(Answers will be found on pages 19 & 20).*



- {1} Wirral once boasted no less than five lighthouses (four of them still standing). Can you name the five ?
- {2} Where is Wirral's uranium enrichment plant to be found ?
- {3} What important structure stood on Grange Hill, West Kirby, where the sandstone column now stands and why was its secondary role important ?
- {4} During the 19<sup>th</sup> century there lived in Bebington a celebrated collector of antiquities and works of art. He was also in business as a jeweller and goldsmith in Liverpool. What was his name ?
- {5} In 1941, Cammell Laird completed a battleship that later carried Churchill across the Atlantic to a secret meeting with Roosevelt. The ship was sunk in the same year in the Far East. What was her name ?
- {6} What was the name of the famous literary figure and American consul to Liverpool who came to reside at Rock Ferry in 1853 ?
- {7} The Bishop of Sodor and Man was born in Burton Village in 1663. What was his name ?
- {8} King William III with a large army sailed from Hoylake in 1690 in order to fight a battle in Ireland. What is the name of the battle ?
- {9} An early 17<sup>th</sup> century Cheshire half-timber style inn still stands and is still open (in normal times) at Raby. What is the name of the inn ?
- {10} Heswall station on the Hooton to West Kirby line was opened in 1886. What year did the station close ?



# *Laughter ~ the best medicine ....*



*Amusing howlers in church bulletins :*

- Coming Up – Theological Open House. We discuss thought-provoking topics. Your opinions are hardly welcome.
- Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our church and the community.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- The rose on the altar this morning is to announce the birth of David Alan Belzer, the sin of Rev. and Mrs. Julius Belzer.
- This afternoon there will be a meeting in the south and north ends of the church. Children will be baptized at both ends.
- This being Easter Sunday, we will ask Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
- Miss Charlene Mason sang “I will not pass this way again”, giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.
- Barbara remains in hospital and needs blood donors for more transfusions. She is also having trouble sleeping and requests tapes of the vicar’s sermons.
- The Rector will preach his farewell message after which the choir will sing “Break Forth into Joy.”
- Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in church. So ends a friendship that began during their schooldays.
- Eight new choir robes are currently needed, due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.
- The Sunday School will be presenting Shakespeare’s Hamlet in the Church Centre on Friday at 7 p.m. The Congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.
- The Vicar spoke briefly this evening, much to the delight of his audience.
- Bertha Belch, a missionary from Africa, will be speaking tonight at Calvary Methodist Church. Come hear Bertha Belch all the way from Africa.
- The Vicar unveiled the church’s new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday : “I Upped My Pledge – Up Yours.”



## Through the Garden Window

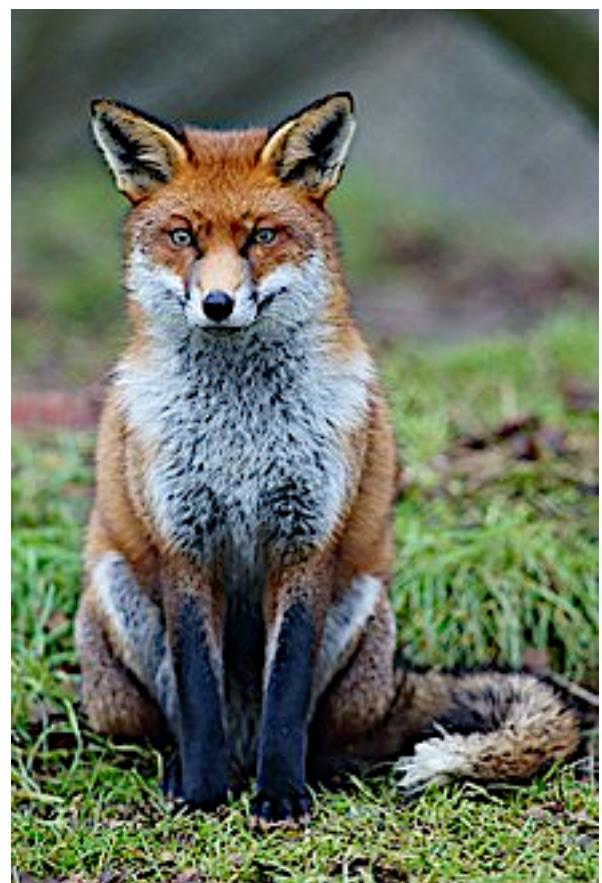
Up until recent years a glance out of the window at night-time across many a Wirral garden would bring into view a fox. Travelling home after midnight, or glancing across the road from your bedroom window, would also reveal a fox sauntering along, hardly giving a human-being a second look, such was the fox's unconcern and the confidence

he felt that he was in no danger from man. All this came to an abrupt end with the introduction of the wheelie-bin ; overnight denying the scavenging fox one of his simplest sources of food supply. They are still seen hereabouts, occasionally, but not in the numbers we once witnessed.

The russet-red fur and bushy tale provides the fox with an unmistakable profile. Weighing in at around 5 to 8 kilos, they are smaller than many people imagine. Their scientific name is *Vulpes vulpes*, and our common red fox is found in prolific numbers across the entire Northern Hemisphere. His presence in Australia places him on the list of the "world's 100 worst invasive species". A born survivor, ever adaptable, the fox is equally at home on our city streets as he is in our woods. Foxes have no natural predators in the UK, not even man since the controversial ban on fox-hunting, which, despite its romantic and picturesque portrayal of members of the upper crust in smart red or black coats, riding fine steeds, and sounding horns for '*a hunting we will go*' ; had a more serious and practical purpose, as any farmer with the occupants of his chicken coop needlessly slaughtered overnight – with the fox carrying off only one of his victims in order to feed his vixen and cubs – will tell you. Farmers now resort to laying down poison which many argue is far crueler and condemns the fox to a lingering and painful death. Indeed, man's relationship with the fox has been a 'love-hate' relationship for centuries. On the positive side, many of our country pubs are named in honour of the fox : *The Fox and Hounds*, *The Red Fox*, *The Fox and Barrel*

and *The Snooty Fox*, to name but a few. On the other hand, we use less praiseworthy expressions such as ‘*Sly as a Fox*’ ; or say that one is ‘*Fox Sleeping*’ for sleeping with one eye open. There is an old saying : ‘*A dog, a fox, and a weasel, sleep with one eye open.*’ And there are a good number of other old sayings in which the fox features : “*A wise fox will never rob his neighbour’s hen-roost*” for example. Meaning, a person up to no good will travel further from home where he is not known. The fox is immortalized in tales and legends for its cunning and stealth.

Foxes live on a diet of rabbits, voles, rodents, birds, invertebrates, carrion, fruit and berries – presumably the latter as a dessert ! Those living on the coast will even go for gulls’ eggs, and urban foxes will scavenge for leftovers from human activity. It is not difficult to see why the fox has such an ability to survive. Man persecuted the fox for centuries, but he keeps on bouncing back. However, they do not have a long life-span : normally two or three years in the wild, although up to fourteen years in captivity. The male fox barks, not unlike a dog, whereas the female produces a spine-chilling scream, heard especially during the winter when Mr. Fox goes a-courtting. They live in burrows called an ‘earth’, and they mark their territories by leaving a trail of urine or greyish droppings. Vixens give birth, usually four to seven cubs, between March and May. Although the fox is to be seen throughout the British Isles, he is absent from most islands. He is at home in almost every environment : woodland, farmland, coastal areas, mountains, towns and cities.



A country fox normally wanders over an area of no more than 5 acres, while his urban cousin thinks nothing of covering 60 to 120 acres. They hunt chiefly at night, their eyes giving them excellent night-vision. However, increasingly, especially in urban districts, they can be seen wandering about in daylight. Is your nocturnal cat in danger ? Very rarely. Despite the myth that foxes kill cats, they largely ignore each other. If there is an encounter, the fox will usually back down. But, if you keep a pet rabbit or guinea-pig, make sure you secure his cage. The fox is nothing if not a cunning fellow !



# Colonel Fazackerley Butterworth-Toast

By Charles Causley (1917-2003)



Colonel Fazackerley Butterworth-Toast  
Bought an old castle complete with a ghost,  
But someone or other forgot to declare  
To Colonel Fazak that a spectre was there.

On the very first evening, while waiting to dine,  
The Colonel was taking a fine sherry wine,  
When the ghost, with a furious flash and a flare,  
Shot out of the chimney and shivered, 'Beware !'

Colonel Fazackerley put down his glass  
And said, 'My dear fellow, that's really first class !  
I just can't conceive how you do it at all.  
I imagine you're going to a Fancy Dress Ball ?'

At this, the dread ghost made a withering cry.  
Said the Colonel (his monocle firm in his eye),  
'Now just how do you do it, I wish I could think.  
Do sit down and tell me, and please have a drink !'

The ghost in his phosphorous cloak gave a roar  
And floated about between ceiling and floor.  
He walked through a wall and returned through a pane  
And backed up the chimney and came down again.



Said the Colonel, 'With laughter I'm feeling quite weak !'  
(As trickles of merriment ran down his cheek).  
'My house-warming party I hope you won't spurn.  
You MUST say you'll come and you'll give us a turn !'

At this, the poor spectre - quite out of his wits -  
Proceeded to shake himself almost to bits.  
He rattled his chains and he clattered his bones  
And he filled the whole castle with mumbles and moans.

But Colonel Fazackerley, just as before,  
Was simply delighted and called out, 'Encore !'  
At which the ghost vanished, his efforts in vain,  
And never was seen at the castle again.

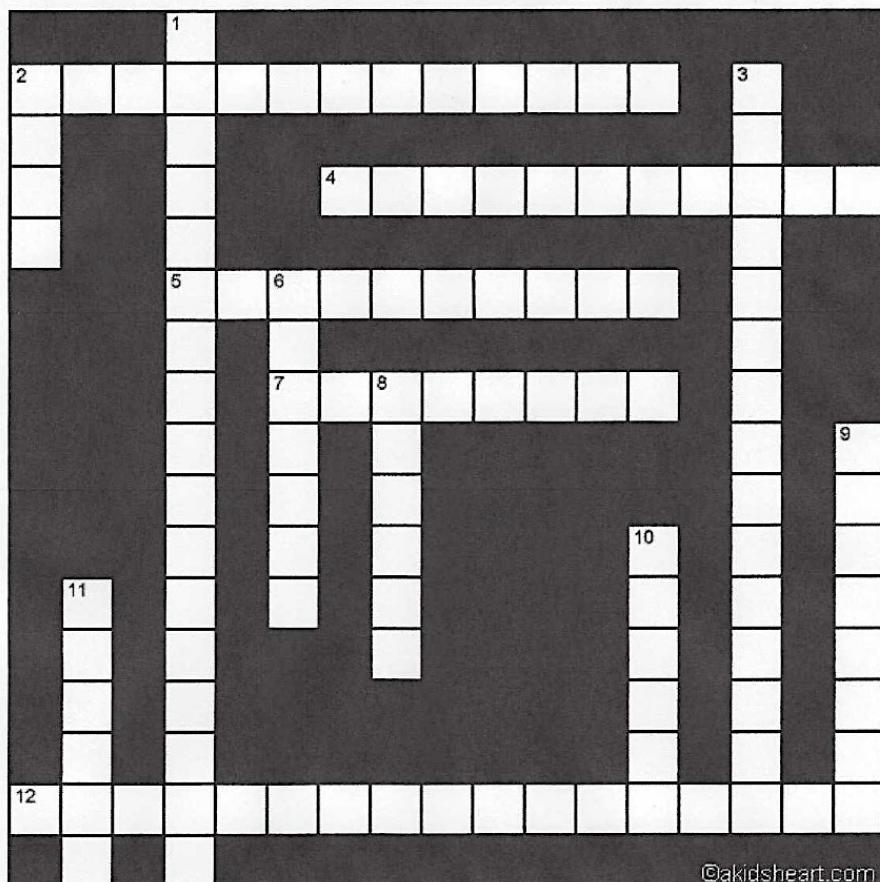
'Oh dear, what a pity!' said Colonel Fazak.  
'I don't know his name, so I can't call him back.'  
And then with a smile that was hard to define,  
Colonel Fazackerley went in to dine.



Many residents of Hoylake and Meols will recall the historic wreck of the *Emblematic*, a wooden fishing smack-rigged trawler built at Sunderland in 1873 and acquired by the Eccles family of Hoylake in 1877. She was torn from her moorings during a storm in January 1883 and wrecked at Leasowe. Unable to salvage her, *Emblematic* was abandoned and the sea-wall built over her. In 1976, during wall repairs, she was dug out and, amazingly, still floated. However, before she could be lifted ashore, she sank again, this time off Meols as seen above at low tide. Merseyside Maritime Museum spent a frustrating 18 months before finally recovering her – in two halves. As the late Michael Stammers remarked at the time, museum staff renamed her, "*Problematic*" owing to the number of salvage attempts that had been thwarted.

# Bible Crossword

The Apostles



**Across**

- 2. Betrayed Jesus
- 4. Nathanael
- 5. Jesus told him to feed His sheep
- 7. Surname of Lebbeus
- 12. Known as the less

**Down**

- 1. Herod had him killed with the sword
- 2. He was exiled on the isle of Patmos
- 3. The Zealots
- 6. Use to be a tax collector
- 8. Peter's brother; He told Jesus about the lad with the fish and bread
- 9. He took Judas' place
- 10. He brought Nathanael to Christ
- 11. The doubting one

©A Kid's Heart  
akidshheart.com

*Answers on Page 18      Print this page.*

Please note : some spellings are American !

## Edwardian Rambles

The Editor is grateful to Sheila Saunders for sending in the following interesting extract of an Edwardian's view of Hoylake and the Wirral. Sheila tells us that the author, Henry Atty, was born in 1874 in Newton, Lancashire, and arrived in Warrington, penniless, worked as a compositor (a person who arranges type for printing), but later opened his own print shop as a compositor and stationer and lived in Warrington for the rest of his life. His wife, Margaret, who accompanies her husband to Wirral, was a skilled seamstress and later a spiritualist who held seances in their home. Henry Atty was a kind, gently-spoken man, venturing forth in his overcoat and trilby in order to sketch local scenes ; sitting at home in the evenings painting at his easel by gaslight in order to help him relax and divert his mind from his financial worries. Life for the Atty family was not easy. Nevertheless, he was a generous man and often gave his pictures away as gifts, simply happy to give pleasure to those around him. The journal of these wanderings would have been lost, if not discovered at the back of a wardrobe by the great granddaughter of a friend of his to whom he had given it, called '*Cycling Rambles*'. There is much more than the exploration of Wirral : visits to Knutsford, Arley, Budworth, Lymm, Alderley Edge and of course Chester, with the mythical historical and literary associations of these places. "I was amused" adds Sheila, "by his passing reference to my hometown of St Helens, as 'that pivot of commerce so noted for its pills.' "

A charming description of the beauties of Wirral and Cheshire at the beginning of the last century is given in *Edwardian Rambles* by Henry Atty,<sup>1</sup> in his excellent handwriting, together with his own beautiful watercolour illustrations. With his wife and sometimes joined by a couple of friends, Mr Atty, who lived in Warrington, cycled from Birkenhead to Hoylake, during a week's holiday, '*..... after calculating the expenses of the various places and also the advantages of good roads for cycling.*'

*'The first thing that struck me' he writes, '..... was the modern architectural structures, ..... and the beautiful gardens. ..... The promenade was exceptionally fine and we had the pleasure of seeing a very pretty sunset, which, by the way is one of the main attractions of the place.'* The next day they strolled to West Kirby, '*..... commanding a fine panoramic view of the Welsh Mountains, the Snowdonian range lending a most attractive background, while in the foreground we have Holywell, the copper mines of Mostyn, the Point of Air (sic) and lighthouse and various farmsteads on the hill-sides. West Kirby has a little more of the antique and also has more the appearance of a town than Hoylake. It is very pleasantly situated at the foot of the well-wooded Grange Hill.'*

*'The promenade' he says after describing Grange Beacon and its history, 'vies with Hoylake for its attractions, having a large marine lake on which boating and bathing may be indulged in, regardless of the state of the tide. We slowly sauntered back to meet the tide along the sands of the Dee, ultimately reaching the red rocks, ..... opposite the notorious Hilbre Island ..... now used as a look-out and telegraph station by the Mersey Dock trustees.'* The same day they cycled at least 20 miles, up Grange Hill and on to Caldy village, when he was struck by '*..... the church nestling among the trees , the black and white reading room ..... an old cross on the hillside, and the general well-wooded nature of the country lane.*'

On to Thurstanston, where they climbed '*..... a large mass of rock known as Thor's Stone, which is said by some to be of Druidical or Danish origin. It is undoubtedly a fine view finder and has the advantage of being prettily situated among the heather, bracken and gorse covered hills.*'

He was disappointed in Heswall '*..... as I had anticipated seeing an ancient little village ..... but it is an old village with a modern appearance.*'<sup>2</sup>

After more exploration of Wirral, the small party had a 'short excursion to Hilbre Island '*To commence with we had to discard shoes and stockings to enable us to cross over a mile of sands with numerous channels of water.*' He describes the beautiful sight of '*..... gulls and smaller birds basking in the sun on a glistening strip of yellow sand,*' and also '*..... the common sight of seeing old and young of both sex(es) displaying more of their legs than they would care for their friend(s) in the various towns they came from to see !*'

On Hilbre Island '*..... we had anticipated something of a bare rocky nature, and were quite unprepared for the magnificent cliffs on the south side of the island and the green sward on the top with sheep and horses grazing on it. We came across some fresh attraction in the shape of a cave, the jutting out of some rocks which had been washed into all sorts of fantastical shapes by the constant beating of the tide ..... the whitewashed buildings of the Mersey Docks and Harbour board, the yachts lying on the sands, while others were anchored in one of the deeper channels*'.

The following day, he took photographs at Caldy and Thurstanston and '*..... spent the evening in Hoylake listening to the music and patter of a concert party at the lighthouse*'.<sup>3</sup> Early the following morning on to the north end of Hoylake promenade to have '*..... an admirable view of what is known as the*

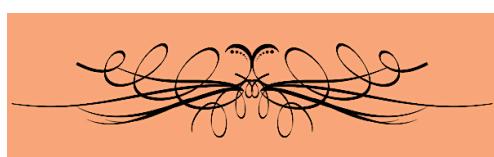
*submerged forest, in which there was numerous trunks of fallen trees. In places they were covered with tidal sludge or blue clay. It appears that the remains of deer, cattle, dogs and relics of an ancient barbarous race have been found here .... and what particularly claimed our attention being the summer camp on the sand hills of the poor children of Liverpool.'*

After breakfast, a return to Hilbre '*..... on our return we were rather fatigued and ..... spent the remainder of the day in the village, on the promenade, and also a little bowling ..... to the strains of selections from various operas given by an imperfect band of the seaside variety.*' But the following day, Mr Atty was not so impressed by New Brighton, via Moreton, '*...this village is hardly worth detailing as there is nothing striking from a scenic or architectural viewpoint*'. Leasowe's scores of tents, huts and caravans on reclaimed land reminded him of '*..... one of the camp towns we read of in the gold centres.*' After the unpleasant experience of cycling along the wet sands, he wondered '*..... what pleasure anyone can find in spending a holiday in New Brighton .....The smell of restaurants, the common and suggestive peep shows, roundabouts, aerial railways, ice-cream and hoky-poky vendors, the screeching of steamers, and the general crowded appearance of the place are features that I resent.*' Though he does admire '*..... the fine promenade, good sands for children and a picturesque lighthouse.*'

The last day of the holiday Mr Atty and his wife went to Red Rocks hoping to expose the last three plates on their camera on the sea, but '*..... there was practically no tide worth photographing so we amused ourselves by striking attitudes on the rocks and at the water edge*'.

On the way home '*..... we partook of tea' in Liverpool, but' the noise and bustle got on our nerves to such an extent that we made a bee-line for Old Swan. .... We left Hoylake with pangs of regret but were very pleased indeed when we arrived in Warrington.'*

- 1** *Edwardian Rambles* by Henry Josiah Atty, published 1998 by Alfresco Press.
- 2** It is possible that Henry Atty only visited the upper village of Heswall, rather than the lower village with its ancient church.
- 3** The Hoylake lighthouse would have been the Lower Lighthouse near the old lifeboat station, and not the Upper Lighthouse that still stands in Valentia Road.



## *Mersey Sea Fords*

At low tide, in summer, the Mersey estuary dwindles to a thin streak, which under natural conditions would be fordable. In olden times there was a low-tide ford at Hale, another opposite Sankey brook (not far from the later Fiddler's Ferry). The Hale ford is recorded from the fifteenth century, but was an old passage. Fish were sent by Weston in Cheshire by this route. In 1423 a John Walley, of Runcorn, in attempting to ride the ford, was drowned, although the fish-laden horses crossed safely. In 1465 a John Jackson, a cattle dealer of the north, was stopped when taking over cattle, horses and sheep until toll was paid to the lord of the manor. During the Civil War it was used, after the defeat at Marston Moor in Yorkshire, by Prince Rupert's Royalist army, in its retreat to Chester and Wales. Their scouts found that Warrington bridge was too strongly held on behalf of Cromwell to be forced.

There is still a definite patch of ground in the estuary on the line of the old ford, and ancient lanes point to it from both sides, but a dangerous gap or two were dredged out 150 years ago when the Mersey was made navigable to Warrington bridge and the Weaver navigation was opened. Till that time, farmers' carts, people on foot, and gentlemen's carriages went over quite regularly. It was not a mail-coach route, however. There were fords of less importance between Oglet and Garston and the villages on the Cheshire side. In 1715, William Massey, of Puddington Hall, in Wirral, joined the "rebels" at Preston, and found that the commander (Robert Forster) was unfit for his job, and that his army was melting away. Being well mounted, Massey rode south-west from Preston before King George's regular troops completed its encirclement. William knew that Liverpool, which was the easiest and surest passage to Cheshire, was a hostile town, and so he rode to the east side, to the little hamlet of Oglet, near Speke. Though three miles across, in certain stages of tide, a passage could be risked by a rider. He made the crossing, and to create an alibi, Massey invented the ruse copied by Dick Turpin. When near home he thrashed an unoffending countryman who, of course, duly summoned him before the magistrates for assault. When arrested for his suspected part in the Rebellion, Massey brought this summons as proof that he was in Wirral at the time and therefore could not be in the dangerous proximity of Preston.

When they arrived at Puddington Hall, the state of both man and beast may well be imagined. They had covered forty-five miles from Preston to Puddington, in darkness and rain, and including a three-mile crossing of the estuary. The horse died at the stable door, where it was buried with honour. For long the Puddington Hall people pointed out the very stone under which the horse lies, though the entire Hall has been rebuilt again and again. The story continues that Massey was barely in time with his return, for his enemies, coming from Chester, were almost at the door when he arrived. However, William went straight to bed, and called in the family doctor. Massey bore too prominent a name in the Stuart and Catholic cause not to be noted, and shortly he was arrested and removed to Chester Castle. Here he died within three months. Probably a broken heart was one of the causes of death, though another version has it that he was frozen to death in a dungeon of the Castle during a bitter winter.

Extract from *The River Mersey* by William T. Palmer, F.R.G.S., M.B.O.U. published by Robert Hale, 1944



**Outside was the ship's rush to the wind's hurry  
A resonant wire-hum from every rope,  
The broadening bow-wash in a fiery flurry,  
The leaning masts in their majestic slope,  
And all things strange with moonlight ; filled with hope  
By all that beauty going as man bade,  
He turned and slept in peace. Eight bells were made.**

**"Dauber"** John Masefield

---

**Answers for the Bible Crossword on page 13**

**The Apostles - Answers**

**Across**

- 2. Betrayed Jesus - **JUDAS ISCARIOT**
- 4. Nathanael - **BARTHOLOMEW**
- 5. Jesus told him to feed His sheep - **SIMON PETER**
- 7. Surname of Lebbeus - **THADDEUS**
- 12. Known as the less - **JAMES, SON OF ALPHEUS**

**Down**

- 1. Herod had him killed with the sword - **JAMES, SON OF THUNDER or JAMES, SON OF ZEBEDEE**
- 2. He was exiled on the isle of Patmos - **JOHN**
- 3. The Zealotes - **SIMON, A CANAANITE**
- 6. Use to be a tax collector - **MATTHEW**
- 8. Peter's brother; He told Jesus about the lad with the fish and bread - **ANDREW**
- 9. He took Judas' place - **MATTHIAS**
- 10. He brought Nathanael to Christ - **PHILIP**
- 11. The doubting one - **THOMAS**

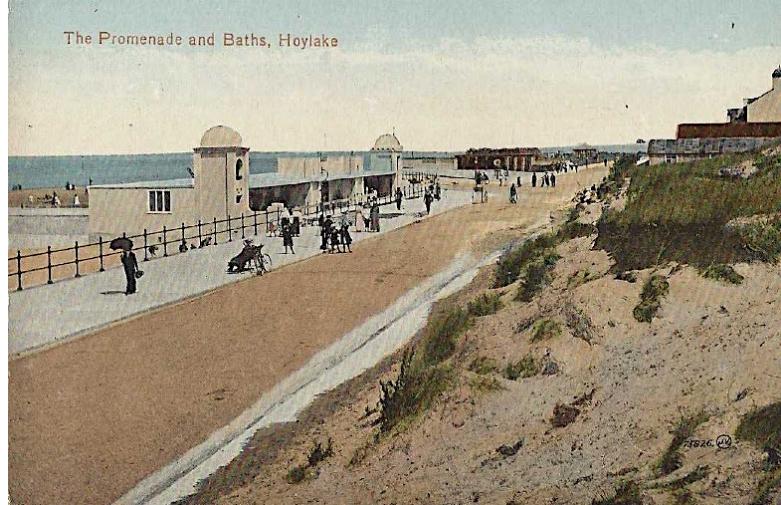
*Answers to the quiz questions on page 7*

- {1} New Brighton, Bidston, Leasowe, Hoylake Lower, and Hoylake Upper Lighthouse. (New Brighton light operated from 1830 to 1973 ; Bidston – its first lighthouse from 1771, and its second, 1873 to 1913 ; Leasowe from 1764 to 1908 ; Hoylake Lower, 1865 to 1908 – demolished in the early 1920s ; Hoylake Upper, 1865 to 1886 – both had replaced the Lake Lights of 1764).
- {2} Capenhurst. This site came into being during the Second World War as a Royal Ordnance factory. In the post-war era it was developed as a uranium enrichment facility. The site was chosen by the M.O.D. to store nuclear material from defueled Royal Navy submarines.
- {3} A windmill stood on Grange Hill until it was blown down in the horrendous hurricane that struck the UK in January 1839. For years, the windmill had served as a navigation aid for vessels coming into Hoylake. In 1841, the Liverpool Dock Trustees erected the present sandstone column to replace the lost landmark.
- {4} Joseph Mayer (1803-1886). He moved to Bebington in 1860 and did much for the village, providing a library, gardens, lecture hall, etc. He was equally beneficial to Liverpool where he had his jeweller's shop in Church Street. Mayer amassed a collection of some 20,000 drawings, engravings, autograph letters ; plus works of art and antiquities. He is buried in St. Andrew's churchyard, Bebington.
- {5} *H.M.S. Prince of Wales*. Completed in March 1941, this battleship went against the *Bismarck* in May, with shipyard workers still on-board, scoring two hits on the enemy. Following repairs, she took Churchill across the Atlantic in August for the historic secret meeting. In December 1941, lacking air support, she was sunk by Japanese aircraft with the loss of 327 sailors. Her companion, *Repulse*, was also sunk. *Prince of Wales* had been in commission for less than a year.
- {6} Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864). Hawthorne was appointed American Consul to Liverpool in 1853, eventually, after he and his family had stayed in a Liverpool hotel, he rented a house in Rock Ferry. The house, sadly, was demolished to make way for the bypass. Hawthorne, after touring England and Europe, returned to America in 1857.

- {7} Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man (1663-1755), was born in the village of Burton. He studied medicine at Trinity College, Dublin, and was ordained priest in 1689, going on to become bishop on the Isle of Man and is buried on the island. He was also a notable bibliophile.
- {8} The Battle of the Boyne. Fought across the River Boyne close to Drogheda, between the forces of the deposed James II of England & Ireland, VII of Scotland ; and William of Orange who had acceded to the throne in 1689. William was victorious and James fled to France never to return. The battle secured the Protestant succession.
- {9} The Wheatsheaf, a 17<sup>th</sup> century thatched pub and restaurant in Raby village, known locally as the ‘Thatch’.
- {10} Heswall Station, on the Hooton to West Kirby branch line, closed on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1956 when passenger trains ceased to run. The branch had opened in 1866, originally terminating at Parkgate. The line was extended to West Kirby in 1886. Goods trains ran after 1956 until the line closed in 1962 and now forms the Wirral Way.

An Edwardian Postcard of Hoylake Promenade, and the seawater baths, on the road towards Meols.

Note the last remnants of the Sandhills that once stretched from Hilbre Point to New Brighton and defended the hinterland.



### *Editor's Endnote :*

A very warm welcome to the congregation of St. John’s, Meols who are receiving the *Dispatch* in addition to readers from St. Hildeburgh’s ; and also to some residents of Heswall – friends of Captain Michael & Mrs. Rosanne Barratt.

The Editor can be contacted by email : [michael@marinecannon.com](mailto:michael@marinecannon.com)

Michael Nash.