

St. Hildeburgh's *Dispatch*



No. 8.

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A fortnightly on-line paper to entertain all during the coronavirus pandemic

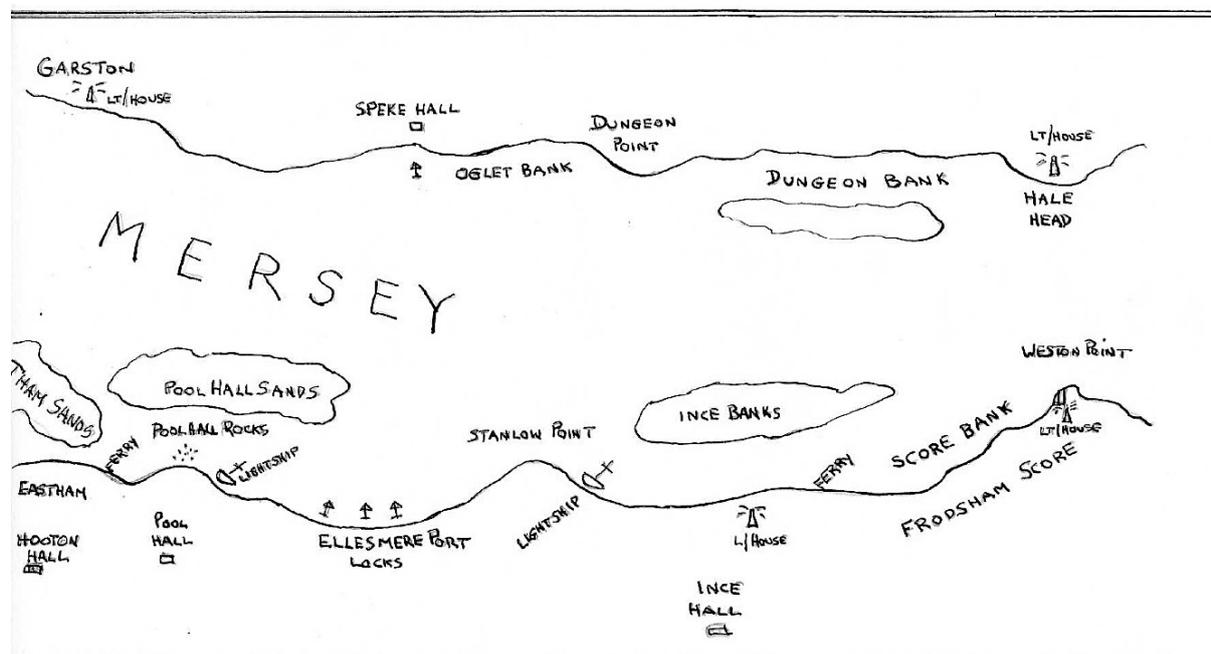
Upper Mersey Navigation



The story of the River Mersey, its navigation and its shipping off Liverpool and Birkenhead is well-known and fully recorded in countless instances. Less understood, however, is the navigation of the upper river and its maritime importance to both Lancashire and Cheshire. In days gone by it was a hive of maritime activity.

An imaginary line drawn across the Mersey from Eastham on the Wirral shore to Garston – about five miles below Liverpool – separates the upper and lower portions of the river. The development of Garston Docks brought larger vessels to the very edge of that boundary, especially after the opening of the large Stalbridge Dock in 1909 attracting the banana and timber trades. The same applies to the Cheshire side of the river. The opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894 brought large ocean-going cargo vessels bound for the inland port of Manchester 36 miles from Eastham. Prior to these events, the upper Mersey was chiefly used by small coastal vessels and by ‘flats’ – the local sailing barges that brought coal down the Sankey Canal from the coalfields of St. Helens ; and salt down the River Weaver from the Cheshire ‘wiches’. The Duke of Bridgewater also built his canal from Worsley so that he could bring his coal to his privately-owned ‘Dukes Dock’ in Liverpool, and manufactured goods down from Manchester for export – his canal also connecting with the Trent & Mersey and branching down to join the Mersey at Runcorn where docks were developed. Here schooners from Cornwall arrived with their holds full of china-clay, sailing about 385 miles from harbours like Fowey. From Runcorn, the clay was transhipped and carried by barge down the Trent & Mersey to the

Potteries. Docks were also built on the opposite bank at Widnes for the chemical trade, and for the sand hoppers owned by Richard Able and William Cooper. Back on the Cheshire shore, red sandstone from the quarries on Weston hill was carried down river by flats from Weston Point and used for public works both in Liverpool and in Wirral. In addition to this, many small boatyards on both banks of the Mersey from Fiddler's Ferry to Runcorn built a wide variety of small craft, including numerous flats.



Plan of the Mersey in 1871 from Garston to Hale ; Eastham to Weston Point (not to scale)

There is an enchanting description of the view from Hale over to the Cheshire shore, written in a rare pamphlet of 1851 by Elizabeth, the wife of the vicar of St. Mary's, Hale, the Rev. William Stewart :

“At tidetime, the scene assumes a very animated and interesting character, from the numerous Bridgewater steamers, with their long trains of barges, and the numberless small sailing craft, with their red and white sails, passing to and from the improving town of Runcorn. These form a pleasing contrast to the scene at low water, when little else is seen but large sandbanks, formerly crossed at low water by horses and carts from Cheshire, on their way to the Whiston coal-pits. As many as thirty have been known to cross in one day, returning after the following tide ; but the channels are now too deep to allow of such means of access.”

Fording the Mersey took place in ancient times on numerous and regular occasions (see *Dispatch* No. 3, p. 17, for an example at Oglet) but many of these attempts ended in tragedy. In the 15th century for example, the only son of Sir James Harrington was returning from Trafford with his bride (a daughter of that house) when he perished on his wedding day attempting to ford the Mersey at Northenden – and there the crossing is narrow. Another example occurred on the Eve of All Saints, 1423, when a certain John Walley of Runcorn, attempting to ford the Mersey between Hale and Weston with two horses laden with fish from Formby, and himself on a third horse, got into difficulties. The horses carrying the fish got safely across, but John Walley and his own horse drowned. His horse was washed ashore on the next tide.

Our knowledge of traffic on the upper Mersey in early times is sketchy. Until the 1730s, Bank Quay at Warrington was the upper limit of navigation. The Mersey beyond this point was too shallow, had too many bends in its course, and was choked with mud banks. The Mersey & Irwell Navigation Act of 1721 changed all that. New locks were built, and the most hazardous bends straightened with new cuts. Vessels of 50 tons could now reach Manchester. The completion of the Sankey Canal in 1757 greatly increased traffic up-river. Liverpool, both commercially and domestically, was desperate for coal, and roads out of the town were few and wholly unfit for most purposes. Chat Moss and other peat bogs were considerable obstacles. Daniel Defoe travelled over Chat Moss in 1724 and wrote :

“From hence (Warrington), on the road to Manchester, we pass'd the great bog or waste call'd Chatmos, the first of that kind that we see in England ... The surface, at a distance, looks black and dirty, and is indeed frightful to think of, for it will bear neither horse or man, unless in an exceeding dry season, and then not so as to be passable, or that any one should travel over them ... What nature meant by such a useless production, 'tis hard to imagine ; but the land is entirely waste, except ... for the poor cottagers fuel, and the quantity used for that is very small.”

When the Liverpool to Manchester railway was proposed in the 1820s, there were many who felt that their money was safe in betting that no train would ever run over Chat Moss. The first train actually crossed the Moss safely in 1830 and the track is still in use today. A notable engineering achievement. In the eighteenth century, however, the only solution to transporting Lancashire coal to Liverpool was by canal, and the Sankey Canal became the first industrial man-made waterway in England. Coming in the opposite direction, cargoes of copper ore shipped from Amlwch (copper mining had increased during the 1770s on Anglesey) went up the Mersey and on up the Sankey Canal in order to be smelted at the Lancashire coalfields, as well as being required in Warrington. Vessels returned to Anglesey with their holds full of Lancashire coal for the copper mines. By 1800, the upper Mersey had become a waterway of some significance. Cargoes of Welsh slate from Penrhyn was also in great demand, not only in Liverpool and Birkenhead, but also in Runcorn and Frodsham.

During the first half of the 19th century, three bodies held sway on the upper Mersey : the Bridgewater Trustees, the Weaver Trustees, and those of the Mersey & Irwell. Each saw the other as a rival, but all three were united in their opposition to what they considered to be interference in upper Mersey affairs by the Liverpool Dock Trustees and Liverpool Corporation. With the introduction of the Mersey Conservancy Act of 1842, the Mersey Conservancy Commission came into being and answerable to the Crown. It was their duty to produce surveys for both the Dock Trustees and Corporation of Liverpool. This authority for the Estuary was inherited by the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board when it was established in 1858, and it was the Board who now surveyed the Upper Estuary, measuring its capacity and depth in 1861, 1871, 1881 and thereafter carrying out surveys every five years. The upkeep of buoys in the upper Mersey and certain other responsibilities fell on the shoulders of the Bridgewater Navigation Company. However, a great change took place in 1876 and it was to last until 1971.

In 1876 the Upper Mersey Navigation Commission took over full responsibility of the Mersey above that imaginary line stretching across the river from Eastham to

Garston, or to be more precise, from Eastham Ferry slip on the Wirral shore, to a point 440 yards southeast of Garston Lighthouse (south corner of Grayson's Graving Dock) on the Lancashire side ; this invisible line continuing upstream to Bank Quay at Warrington. Dredging was required to maintain navigation to Garston Docks, and also up to Widnes and to a lesser extent as far as Warrington on the Lancashire shore. The opening of the Manchester Ship Canal in 1894 meant that ships bound for Runcorn no longer required a channel beyond Eastham, but, like Garston, tonnage both in size and in quantity was increasing. The Act of 1876 was strengthened in 1879, and the membership of the Upper Mersey Navigation Commission consisted of 25 commissioners employing the services of a buoying superintendent and a clerk to maintain its principal office at Runcorn. The powers and duties of the commission related solely to the lighting and buoying of the navigable channels of the upper Mersey. It made no by-laws affecting shipping, but it was empowered to levy certain tolls against vessels navigating the upper Mersey.

The first meeting of the commissioners was held at the Patten Arms Hotel in Warrington, on Thursday, 20th July 1876, commencing at 12 noon. Six commissioners were present, with James Cross in the chair. Their first concern was to produce a seal, and this was approved in October that year. (See the head of this article). Next, they took charge of items belonging to the Bridgewater Navigation Company which, c.1872, had purchased the Bridgewater Canal and the Mersey & Irwell Navigation. In 1885, the newly-formed Manchester Ship Canal Company paid the Bridgewater Navigation Company £1,710,000 for all their property.

On the 20th November 1876, the Upper Mersey commissioners took charge of the following three vessels and all their fittings. The steamer *Preston* built in 1867, the lightship *Rival* anchored in the New Channel, and the lightship *Lyon* anchored off Stanlow Point. At the end of the year they appointed a Captain Davies to be their superintendent on a salary of £150 per annum. In the years that followed the commissioners were kept busy.

In July 1877 it was arranged for the *Rival* to be moved down river to a point between Speke and Garston. In January 1878 the death of William Hindley, keeper of the Ince lighthouse on the Wirral shore, was reported to the commissioners. It was decided not to replace him as the main channel up-river was being maintained on the Lancashire side, although the lighthouse was kept clean and in good working order in case of its need in the future. In fact, in October 1883, the Ince Lighthouse was back in service, and in the same year it became necessary to place a lightship on the Score Bank, or Frodsham Marsh. This replaced the flat *Adventure* that had been placed there. In June 1880 another flat, the *Greenland*, laden with coal, was wrecked inshore of the lightship *Rival* about 500 yards south of Speke perch. The wreck had to be blown up a few weeks later. In early 1884, the lightship *Miner* was positioned in the Ellesmere Port channel, and in 1887 the Ince lighthouse was closed down as it now stood within the lines of deviation of the Manchester Ship Canal whose construction progress had reached almost as far as Runcorn. The canal company handed over the flat *Shamrock* for use as a lightship.

In 1892, the *Miner* was moored off Ditton Brook at the request of the Alkali Union, and during this last decade of the nineteenth century, the commissioners carried out inspections of all their lightships. The *Rival* moored off Speke, formerly a river tug, was found to be completely worn out and it was decided to replace her. The lightship *Vencedora* was purchased in 1898. The *Shamrock* moored off Dungeon, converted into a

lightship in 1888, was found to be in need of repairs. The *Miner* inshore off Ditton Brook was a very old vessel but with repairs it was decided to extend her service life.

In 1899 an old Royal Navy ironclad, the *Resistance*, was towed to a point between Oglet and Dungeon in order to be broken up. Suitable lights and fog signals had to be provided in order to avoid the risk of damage to vessels navigating further up-river. In 1902 another lightship joined the fleet and was named *Arthur Sinclair* in honour of their late chairman who had passed away at the end of 1900.



Ditton Lightship *Arthur Sinclair* in service 1902 to 1920 moored on the North Bank
The figure in the photograph is thought to be Lightshipman, Joseph Harrison

The incidents surrounding the *Arthur Sinclair* are typical of the hazards facing all lightships. During her 18 years in service, more aground than afloat, several vessels collided with her. In 1908, the Liverpool flat *Enterprise* bound for West Bank Dock, Widnes, struck the lightship and dashed Lightshipman Joseph Harrison to the deck causing him injuries. In 1911, the United Alkali flat *Eustace Cary* collided with the lightship and Harrison was so badly hurt this time that he later died of his injuries. His dependents received £181-2/-3d as compensation !

Navigation in the upper Mersey had always been fraught with difficulties. The Admiralty's *West Coast of England Pilot* concluded that sailing directions for this part of the Mersey would be pointless as they could not be relied upon for any length of time. The banks changed so rapidly, they warned, that any chart should be used with caution. Even the shoreline eroded rapidly. In 1843, Admiral Fitzroy, Acting Conservator of the Mersey, reported that he saw several hundred yards of sand and clay cliffs (on which there had been woods, now nearly all gone), yards of surface with trees standing, and all

the earth beneath their roots to a depth of 20 or 30 feet, recently slide down to the stony beach below, soon to be washed away by the tide. The loss on both the Lancashire and Cheshire sides continued for many years, probably at the rate of about a yard per annum. The chart for January 1871 (from which the sketch plan on page 2 is taken) shows that to assist shipping, the following aids had been put in place : The Upper Mersey Lightship, moored opposite Pool Hall Rocks off the Wirral shore near Stanlow Bank ; Stanlow Lightship moored off Stanlow Point ; Ince Lighthouse opposite Ince Banks ; Hale Lighthouse on the North Shore. In total : 30 black buoys, 23 red buoys, 7 perches, 2 lighthouses and 2 lightships. These facilities were increased after the Commission came into being five years later. As channels changed direction, lightships and lighthouses were brought in and out of service. There was also a lighthouse at Ellesmere Port – now part of the Boat Museum. Low Water Surveys were carried out on the river at frequent intervals in order to monitor the movements of channels and banks, and buoys often had to be re-positioned. This work could be hazardous. The old method was to start at Hale Head and walk the banks following the channel obtaining shore marks. The Surveyor had to make sure that he came off the sandbank the same way he went on ; for safety reasons he never took a short cut and he made sure he was clear 2 ½ hours before Liverpool high water. Later, the surveys began at Garston, working their way up to Oglet, Beacon, Dungeon, Bight, Hale Head Lighthouse, Within's Way Beacon, Ditton Beacon and on up to Weston Road. The Surveyor could then ascertain which buoys needed moving. Sometimes eight or nine had to be moved and it took about two days to complete this task. A launch was also used, leaving Old Quay Lock on the ebb tide, sailing down river to lie at anchor off Eastham Bank to await the first of the flood tide, and then return up-river surveying as they went. Before a power craft was obtained, this would be done under oar and sail, even rowing over from Wirral to Garston when required.

Causalities on the Upper Mersey were frequent, especially prior to the Second World War when river traffic was more in evidence. To take one year as an example of vessels running aground or sinking, the year 1921 is seen through the log of the Buoying Steamer *Preston* : 24 Jan. Flat *Geneve* sunk in collision with lightship *Vencedora*. 16 Feb. *Bounty*, steam barge, aground off Within's Way. 25 Feb. Wreck buoy placed over flat *Clara* sunk off Hale Head. 15 Mar. Steamer *Winifred* aground to an anchor on West side of channel below Dungeon Perch. 19 Apr. Wreck of Alkali flat *Clara* destroyed by explosives. 3 Jun. Flat *Moon* sunk at Dungeon. 21 Aug. Elder & Fyffes *SS Chirripo* (4,800 tons, built 1919), aground at Garston on tide, floated with assistance of 8 tugs. 11 Oct. *Dagmar* and 17 flats aground on North side of access to Western Mersey Lock. 8 Dec. Cooper's steamer *Bounty* aground. 19 Dec. Burton's steam barge *Togs* and 3 flats aground on North side of channel – southern bend of main channel.

By 1922, traffic up-river was decreasing, except up to Garston Docks and up to Eastham Locks for passage via Ship Canal to Runcorn and Manchester. The lightships and many of the larger buoys were removed. Buoyage and the Hale Head Lighthouse were maintained, but traffic was reduced to a few barge tows, sand hoppers and occasional coasters. During the Second World War, navigation was maintained, and with the dropping of German mines during the Blitz on Liverpool, Royal Navy minesweepers swept the upper Mersey channels, both upstream and downstream, but no mines were encountered. In 1954, Hale Head Light was extinguished, and in 1965, West Bank Dock at Widnes finally closed. By 1967 the UMNC was defunct and ceased to exist by 1971.

Hale Lighthouse



A Glimpse of Old Wirral

From : *The Vacillations of Hazel* by Mabel Barnes-Grundy

The novel describes the life of a young lady growing up in “Heatherland”. This is Heswall where the author spent her childhood.

In this passage, Hazel is returning from an autumn visit to an Aunt in the town of “Blongton” in the smoke-filled Potteries. She makes the final leg of the journey by horse-drawn bus, electing to travel outside with the driver and rejoice in a return to familiar and much-loved surroundings.



“... I arrived at Birkenhead, and made my way to Woodside and the old familiar bus. ... Soon we had left the town behind us and were swinging along the sweet-scented country lanes ; the horses were fresh and were going home, and the passengers few. The sky was clear, and in the fading light I could just make out the familiar landmarks – the waterworks at Prenton, the old white mill, and the distant Welsh hills.

There were no such lanes in Blongton, and I sniffed in the sweet, seductive scent of dying trees and leaves and bracken, and soft, moist earth.

... It was seven o'clock and quite dark as we swung down the lane and pulled up at our front gate. I could see the lights shining through the trees and shrubs ... I ... passed on to my room ... I opened the window and leant out into the night. The evening was very still. Across the river, in Wales, the lights twinkled at me ... More lights twinkled in the blue above. Then the moon rose in splendour and sent a shimmering band of light across the waters of the Dee. The little waves turned into silver and rippled and tumbled and laughed. And a tiny breeze came along and caught up the laugh and carried it to the trees and leaves close to my window. And the leaves laughed too, and rustled and tumbled one over another to the soft grass below ... Bit by bit the soft stillness of the night entered my being, and a peace fell upon me.”

With thanks to Captain Michael Barritt, R.N., Heswall.



Laughter ~ the best medicine

American Church Signs :



- **Adam & Eve. The first people not to read the Apple terms & conditions.**
- **The fact that there is a Highway to Hell and a Stairway to Heaven, says a lot about anticipated traffic numbers.**
- **Be the kind of person your dog thinks you are.**
- **Sound your horn if you love Jesus, text while driving if you want to meet him.**
- **Tweet others as you would like to be tweeted.**
- **Easter comes but once a year. How often do you ?**
- **Noah was a brave man to sail in a wooden boat with two termites.**
- **What is missing from Ch ch ? u r.**
- **Sin is a short word with a long sentence.**
- **God gave us mouths that close and ears that don't. He may be telling us something !**
- **The Church : Under the same management for 2,000 years.**
- **There are some questions that can't be answered by Google.**
- **Come as you are, you can change inside.**
- **Seven days without prayer makes one weak.**
- **Forgive your enemies – it confuses them.**
- **Whoever stole our church fans, please keep one. It will be hot where you're going.**

Wirral Railway



The following advertisement appeared in the *Directory of Caldy, Great Meols, Hoylake and West Kirby*, compiled by T. K. Allott, and published by F. Gould, 15, Acacia Grove, West Kirby, during the First World War (1916).

“The beautiful country on the Wirral Peninsula ‘twixt Mersey and Dee’ is now opened out to health and pleasure seekers. Through bookings, Day, Week-end, and Long Date Excursions have been introduced by the Cheshire Lines, Great Central, Lancashire & Yorkshire, and other Companies to HOYLAK and WEST KIRBY, from Bradford, Huddersfield, Halifax, Leeds, Bury, Bolton, Blackburn, Preston, Manchester, Oldham, Ashton, Stalybridge, Stockport, Warrington, Widnes, and other Stations in Lancashire and Yorkshire.

The traveller, on arrival at Liverpool Central or Exchange Stations, may make his way to the Landing Stage, and cross the River Mersey on the Seacombe Ferry Steamers. The twenty minutes’ journey from Seacombe Station by the borders of the magnificent inland dock – the Great Float – with a view of the massive ships berthed within its walls – onward past the famous Bidston Observatory and inland Lighthouse, and through the lovely country traversed by the Wirral Railway, brings the tourist to Hoylake. Adjoining the Station are the Famous Golf Links, and within a few minutes’ walk the newly-completed Promenade and Sea Wall. Boating, fishing, bathing and cycling help to make Hoylake one of the most attractive resorts.

A few minutes’ train journey from Hoylake brings the traveller to WEST KIRBY. ‘Here,’ says the *Illustrated London News*, ‘one finds all the elements of the picturesque. So soft yet invigorating is the air that it deserves the title of a Second Mentone.’

The benefits derived by visitors have induced large numbers of them to become residents. The attractions include bathing, boating, yachting on the Marine Lake, daily drives to the numerous historical points of interest, throughout the Peninsula. Deep Sea Fishing from Hilbre Island, etc. Fine Promenade, on which cycling is permitted.

First-class Hotels, and Hydro and well-equipped Boarding Establishments. The journey from Liverpool to West Kirby by River and Rail occupies 35 minutes. Frequent train service throughout the day.

MERSEY ELECTRIC RAILWAY

The electrification of the Mersey Tunnel Railway, and the introduction of an improved service of trains running every few minutes, which connects at Birkenhead Park Station with the trains of the Wirral Railway, forms a short and expeditious route to Wallasey, New Brighton, Hoylake and West Kirby. The Mersey Company's Central Station, underneath the Cheshire Lines Station, provides a convenient means of access for passengers from the Manchester Districts to the Mersey and Wirral Lines.

LUGGAGE IN ADVANCE OF PARCELS

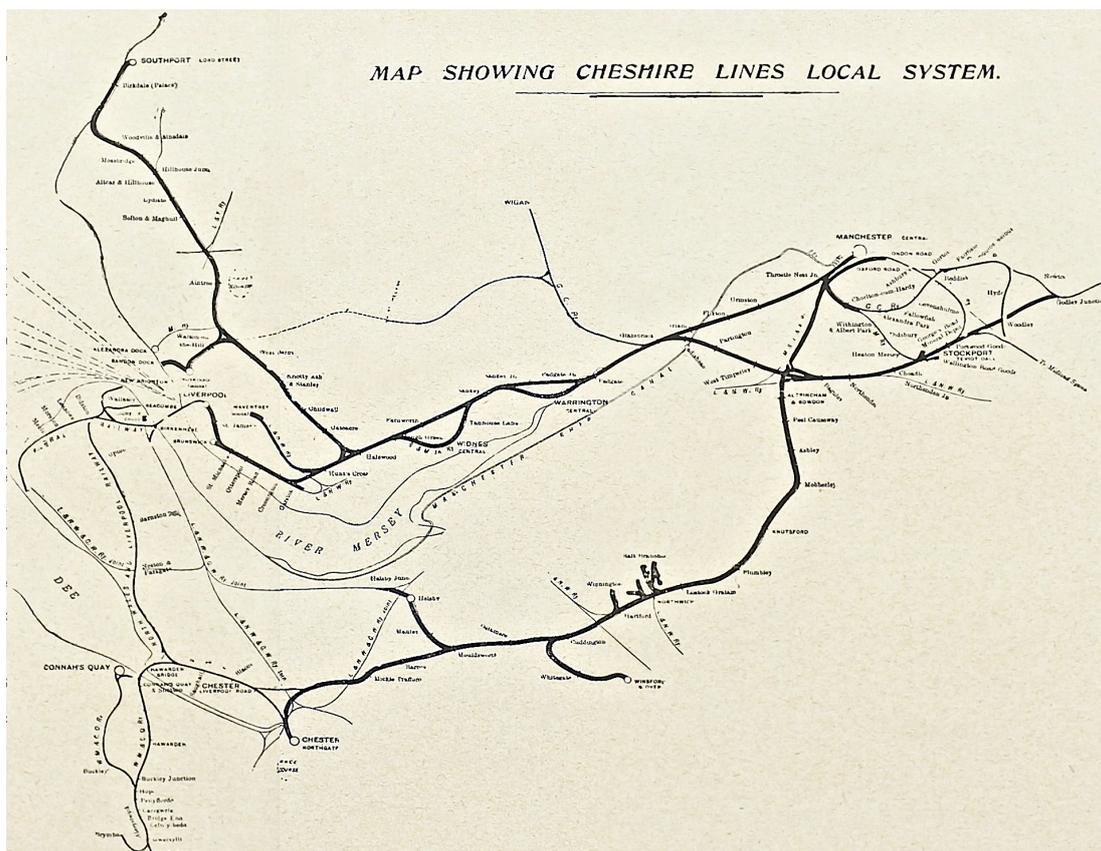
Collected from any address, send a post card to 'Wirral Railway Co. New Brighton.' Or telephone '64 Liscard.' Three collections daily, linking up this District with Express Deliveries, Liverpool and Birkenhead, to all parts of the United Kingdom.

For information regarding Illustrated Free Booklets, Fares, Season Tickets, Rates, Trains, etc., apply to –

J. H. BURNS,
New Brighton Station.

Dec., 1915."

This map was not part of the advertisement.



Wirral Quiz

*How well do you know our Peninsula ?
Test your knowledge with these ten questions.
(Answers will be found on pages 24 & 25).*



- {1} What year did the railway arrive at Hoylake ?
- {2} In 1864, workmen discovered a skeleton on the Wirral Peninsula which has been the centre of scientific interest and speculation ever since. This was the oldest skeleton to be unearthed on Merseyside. Where was it found ?
- {3} The inspiration for Lewis Carroll's smiling Cheshire Cat in *Alice in Wonderland*, came from a visit to an old Wirral Hall. Which Hall ?
- {4} Historians have classified the Wirral Peninsula as the 'Birthplace of England'. Why ?
- {5} The oldest surviving brick-built lighthouse in Great Britain is to be found on the Wirral coast. Where is it located ?
- {6} Where would you have seen the Red Noses and the Yellow Noses ?
- {7} There were two training ships and two reformatory ships moored in the Sloyne off Rock Ferry. Can you name them ?
- {8} Name the Wirral-born actress who twice played the role of Queen Elizabeth I ?
- {9} What connection does Thurston have with the White Star Line and the *Titanic* ?
- {10} Where would you find the 'Dungeon' on the Wirral Peninsula ?



Two Extracts from the *Hoylake Advertiser*, 1930

No. 1 : *Deeside Hooliganism* – Friday, January 24, 1930

By a correspondent

“It is remarkable that in Hoylake and West Kirby, the arcadian home of the elite, private and public property is said to be less immune from wilful damage on the part of mischievous persons than in the case of slumdom,” writes *Judex*. The reason is difficult to discover, but we have heard it suggested, not altogether facetiously, that the extra atom of ozone in the air makes some folks feel a little too ‘fresh’.

The writer reports a recent dangerous gorse fire on Grange Hill, which but for the efforts of the local Fire Brigade, could have resulted in tragedy. “Sad to relate, this fire was deliberately set alight by three schoolboys, who ... confessed their guilt. Not wishing to cast a permanent slur on their characters, the Council, instead of taking legal proceedings against the offenders, interviewed their parents and the boys in private ... The boys apologised for their misdemeanour and promised the Chairman of the Council they would never repeat the offence.”

But after remarking that future vandalism would be treated seriously within the law, *Judex* describes the ‘wilful and malicious damage caused up and down the district by hooligans as “heart-breaking”. This includes the destruction of “fittings of the best quality” in new public conveniences, and smashing electric light bulbs along the promenade. “On one occasion, some of the lads, evidently *‘strong in th’ arm and weak in th’ head*, * carried seats and dumped them in the sea. Can you beat that ? And on Deeside, the home of culture !”

He concludes, firmly ; “If only to preserve the district’s good name, this sort of thing must be sternly suppressed. Folks who feel ‘naughty’ will do well to remember that the watch dogs are on the prowl !”

* See *Dispatch*, No. 1. Page 2.

No. 2 : *American golfers and English snobbishness* – June 20, 1930

American players in the Open at Hoylake “resent the differences ... between professionals and amateurs,” a correspondent writes, and “see no reason why a professional should be treated as an inferior being”. On arrival they found that the lunch

marquee was divided into two parts with two entrances – one for ‘professionals only’ – one for ‘members and temporary members only’.

A Mexican player reputed to earn £5000 a year reported that after a practice round, the famous Bobby Jones, and George Van Elm, amateurs, and himself and a colleague, Horton Smith, went to the clubhouse for lunch, but the two professionals could not eat there. ‘We had to walk to a place half a mile away. It isn’t nice, is it ? This is an open championship, and everybody should be treated alike.’

Commenting on the Royal’s alleged ‘snobbishness’, “this differentiation”, says the writer, was “general throughout the country.” Until this was explained ‘there was talk of professionals withdrawing from the championship’.

With thanks to Sheila Saunders

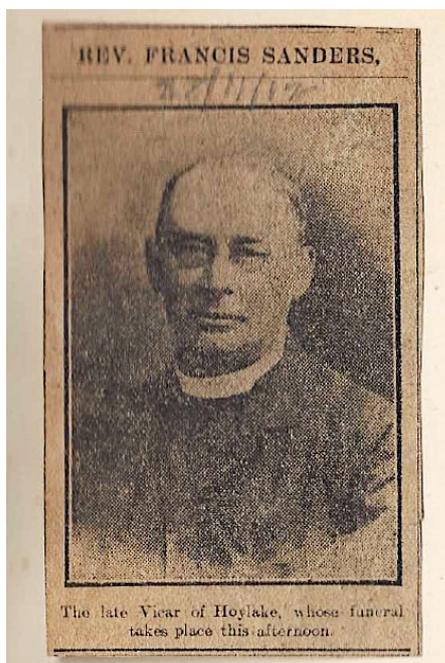


The Church of England plays a vital role in the life of the nation, proclaiming the Christian gospel in words and actions and providing services of Christian worship and praise. Our network of parishes covers the country, bringing a vital Christian dimension to the nation and strengthening community life in numerous urban, suburban and rural settings. Our Cathedrals are centres of spirituality and service, and the network of chaplaincies across continental Europe meets important local needs. Members of the Church of England are actively involved in national life through a wide range of public bodies. Twenty-six bishops are members of the House of Lords and are engaged in debates about legislation and national and international affairs. The Church of England is part of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Here are a few facts & figures (2016) :

1 in 4 primary schools and 1 in 16 secondary schools in England are Church of England schools. Approximately 1 million pupils are educated in more than 4,700 Church of England schools. In October 2016, approximately 930,000 people participated in a Church of England service each week. An additional 180,000 people attended services for schools each week in October 2016. Around 9.4 million people visited a Church of England Cathedral in 2015. Each week, around 37,000 people took part in services in Cathedrals. In 2016, there were 19,550 ordained ministers in the Church of England, including stipendiary clergy, self-supporting ministers, and Chaplains. Additionally, there were 5,760 Readers and Licenced Lay Ministers. The Church of England ordained 484 new clergy in 2016, with 299 (181 men, 118 women) ordained to stipendiary ministry. Over 80,000 volunteers and around 2,700 Church Staff help provide support and activities for children, young people and families. Over 100,000 children and young people participate in activities connected to the church. In 2015, Church of England parishes gave £47 million to charity. 76% of churches run activities in local schools, 66% help with food banks, 60% offer parent and toddler groups and 53% organise lunch clubs or drop-ins. The Church of England has around 16,000 churches, serving every part of the country and open to every local inhabitant. There are 42 mainland Cathedrals, plus one in Peel on the Isle of Man and the Diocese in Europe's Cathedral in Gibraltar. 12,500 church buildings are listed. 45% of all England's Grade I listed buildings are cathedrals and churches.

Rev. Francis Sanders

Vicar of Hoylake, 1891 ~ 1912



One of the most distinguished vicars of Hoylake in terms of literary achievement is undoubtedly the Reverend Francis Sanders, M.A., F.S.A., (1846-1912) ; antiquary, bibliophile, local historian, author, editor, and prolific contributor to the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Born July 1846 in Old Brentford, Middlesex, and baptized on the 9th August 1846 at St. George's, Hounslow, Francis's father was John Sanders (died 1880), a Master Bootmaker who had married, on the 29th July 1845, Harriet, née Lees, at St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London. Both his parents were born in Old Brentford about the year 1819. Francis was the eldest of five children. His siblings were :

Ellen Zilpah (1848-1932), Baptized 14th May 1848

Oliff George (1851-1885), Baptized 23rd March 1851 ¹

Alice (1852-1904), Baptized 21st November 1852

Edith Anne (1854-1904), Baptized 5th November 1854

At the age of fourteen, Francis was living at 3, Euston Square with his aunt, Hannah Belcher, who ran a boarding house there, with Francis attending school before matriculating to New College, Oxford, on the 17th October 1874. There, in 1878, he obtained a first-class honours degree in Modern History before being ordained a Cleric in Holy Orders in the Church of England in 1879. ² He began his ministry as curate of St. Cyprian, Marylebone and was there from 1878 to 1883 during which time (1882) he obtained his M.A. This church was founded in 1866 by the "slum-priest", Father Charles Gutch, a controversial Anglo-Catholic who cared passionately for the poor and under-privileged. The church was situated in a run-down and deprived area of Marylebone, the building being a conversion of two houses and a barn. Francis Sanders had been thrown in at

the deep end ! The church only held 180 and was soon overflowing. A new church, the present building, was built in 1903.

Francis Sanders went on to serve as Chaplain of St. Saviour's Hospital in Osnaburgh Street, near Regent's Park, from 1883 to 1885. In 1845, Dr. Edward Bouverie Pusey, one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement, encouraged the foundation of the Anglian Church's first sisterhood since the Reformation. The convent of the Sisterhood of the Holy Cross opened in March 1845, ministering to the poor of the St. Pancras district. One of the nuns, Sister Clare, provided the money to build a new convent on Osnaburgh Street, off Euston Road. The convent, St. Saviour's, was built by 1852 and the sisterhood moved in and quickly established a small hospital with twelve beds. In 1872, the hospital was renamed St. Saviour's Cancer Hospital. Patients were not treated by surgery, but rather by applying a paste to the affected area made from strong sulphuric acid mixed with powdered asbestos. The idea was to shrink the tumour before removing it. By 1875 it was claimed that 17 in-patients and 50 out-patients had been cured by this method. The medical profession, however, looked on with some alarm over the measures adopted at St. Saviour's and by the employment of unqualified staff. By 1891 the hospital had 25 beds and a year later it changed its name again, this time to St. Saviour's Hospital for Invalid Ladies. The hospital finally closed its doors in 1962.

In 1885, upon leaving St. Saviour's Hospital, Francis came up to the Diocese of Chester and was appointed curate at St. Mary's, Eastham, on the Wirral Peninsula ; a medieval church built around 1150. During the end of his ministry there, Reverend Sanders edited the *Parish Register of Eastham, Cheshire*, and in the same year, 1891, he was appointed, at the age of 44, vicar of Holy Trinity, Hoylake. (Although called Vicar, until the 1890s the incumbents of Holy Trinity were strictly Perpetual Curates³). Whilst at Eastham, Francis who remained a bachelor all his life, appointed Agnes Bell to be his housekeeper. It says a great deal for the Reverend Sanders that Agnes Bell chose to leave her native Eastham in order to continue being his housekeeper in Hoylake Vicarage, at 19, Sea View, and later at 11, Church Road. On the 19th November 1891, Francis was elected a member of the Historic Society of Lancashire & Cheshire. He would go on to become an Hon. Local Secretary, one of only two in Cheshire. The move North appears to have given him his first opportunity to indulge his passion for antiquity, probably lying



dormant since his university days, and with the Wirral he became inspired and absorbed in its history.

The Reverend Francis Sanders would remain Vicar of Hoylake for the next twenty-one years until his death in 1912. During that time with the rapid expansion of the parish, a second church, St. Hildeburgh's, was built on his watch and opened for worship in May 1899 and consecrated four months later. In addition, St. John the Baptist was built at Great Meols, at first serving as a chapel to Holy Trinity, until 1937 when it became independent from Hoylake. St. John's was not completed until 1913 so, sadly, the Reverend Sanders was not alive to see the project come to fruition.

The torch of literature, set alight during his days at Eastham, now burst into full flame in Hoylake, fanned by his new-found friendship with Wirral historian and local author, William Fergusson Irvine (1869-1962), a graduate of Birkenhead School, Hon. Secretary & General Editor of the Historical Society of Lancashire & Cheshire ; Hon. Local Secretary for Cheshire of the Society of Antiquaries. ⁴ Together with Irvine, Francis Sanders edited *Wirral Notes and Queries* ... published in two volumes in 1893 and 1894. They joined forces again to edit and annotate a new edition of *The Parish Registers of Bebington, Co. Chester* ... published in Liverpool in 1897 and originally published in Birkenhead in 1893 by Irvine alone. Both editions are limited to a hundred copies only. Their names are also associated with the long-running *Cheshire Sheaf*, with Sanders involved with the third series (1896, 1898 and 1901). Through his membership of the HSLC where he met and befriended William Fergusson Irvine, Francis Sanders became acquainted with all the leading local historians of the day, including Charles R. Hand, Henry Peet, Ronald Stewart-Brown, John Brownbill, Hilda Gamlin, and many others. Mrs. Gamlin (1844-1898), author of *Twixt Mersey and Dee* (1897), and four other works, was a frequent visitor to Hoylake Vicarage, seeking Francis Sander's advice on a number of literary and historical subjects and confiding in him on the progress of her books.

From 1885 onwards, Reverend Sanders contributed 'lives' for the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Between 1885 and 1900 alone he contributed eleven biographies, including lives of William Stanley (1548-1630) ; John Pearson (1613-1686) ; and William Smith (1711-1787). In 1898 Sanders was nominated a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (F.S.A.), highly regarded worldwide as recognition of significant achievement in the fields of archaeology, antiquities, history and heritage.

All this was accomplished without neglecting his duties at Holy Trinity and later at St. Hildeburgh's. During his incumbency he laboured tirelessly

for the good of Hoylake, his final home, and he earned the respect and esteem of his congregations and of all sections of the community. Surviving sermons show him to have been an evangelical. He was later joined in Hoylake by his two nephews – his sister Ellen’s boys – George William and John Francis Ashby, probably as a result of losing their father in 1895. They were certainly living at Holy Trinity Vicarage by the turn of the century. In 1900, George William was aged 12 and John Francis aged 14. At the time of the Reverend Francis Sander’s death, only John Francis remained in Hoylake. George William was by then living with his mother in Surbiton.

At Hoylake Vicarage, Reverend Sanders amassed an impressive book collection. After his death it was received by bequest at Chester Cathedral where today it forms one of the foundations of the Cathedral’s Library. Its main subject area concerns the lives and writings of the Bishops of Chester from 1605 to 1884, plus a number of works relating to Chester deans and clergy, although a wide range of historical subjects are also represented. The collection includes 8 items of incunábula, ⁵ 217 books that appear in the STC, 643 in Wing, ⁶ plus 626 foreign works pre 1701, and 755 English and 178 foreign 18th century books. The collection is accompanied by a useful manuscript catalogue in the hand of Francis Sanders.



The Reverend Francis Sanders died in Hoylake Vicarage, 11, Church Road, aged 66, ⁷ on Sunday, 24th November 1912 and was buried in Holy Trinity churchyard a few days later. ⁸ The funeral was attended by a large crowd of mourners including a substantial representation of Churchmen and Nonconformists. The choirmen of the Parish Church and of St. Hildeburgh’s acted as bearers and the service was fully choral, conducted by the Reverends H. E. Elwell, Canon Blencowe, A. Hamilton King, W. Hollowell, W. S. P. Skelding, and P. C. Robinson. The organist of Holy Trinity, Mr. E. Farnall, directed the ceremonies.

The chief mourners were Francis Sanders’s sister, Mrs. Ellen Zilpah Ashby, widow, born in 1848 and a former English teacher – her husband, William, had died in 1895 ; John Francis Ashby, who died at Peckham, Surrey, on the 16th May 1920. He had served as a lieutenant in the Cheshire Regiment ⁹ ; and George William Ashby, killed in Loos, France, 25th September 1915. ¹⁰ They were both the late Vicar’s nephews who had lived in Hoylake Vicarage for some years.

The District Council of Hoylake and West Kirby was represented by Isaac Barlow, J.P. (chairman), and more than a dozen other officials. Among

the general mourners were W. G. Land and F. Getty, churchwardens ; J. Fisher, postmaster at Hoylake ; the Vicar's old friend William Fergusson Irvine representing the Society of Antiquaries in London ; and Captain Robert Atkinson Tillotson, Master Mariner (born in Nottinghamshire in 1860), father of Second Lieutenant John Lancelot Tillotson, Dorsetshire Regiment, born in Liverpool in 1897, killed at Arras in 1917 aged 20. There is a plaque to the memory of Captain Tillotson's son in St. Hildeburgh's. The family lived at 43, Cable Road at the time. Captain Tillotson was decorated for his service at sea in the Merchant Navy during the First World War. There was also present, a large number of parishioners and friends of the late Vicar, including the Coastguard and his crew.

Next to the grave in Holy Trinity there is a plaque with an inlaid cross inscribed : "Edith Anne Sanders / 11 November 1904 / Alice Sanders / 8 December 1904 / REV FRANCIS SANDERS / 24 November 1912 / JESU MERCY"



Edith Anne and Alice were sisters of the Reverend Sanders, both, sadly, died within weeks of each other in the winter of 1904, Edith Anne, aged 50, a French teacher, was Baptized in Old Brentford 5th November 1854. She died in Tuebrook Villas, Liverpool, 11th November 1904, leaving £1,240-4/-7d to her elder sister, Mrs. Ellen Zilpah Ashby. Alice, aged 52, was Baptized in Old Brentford 21st November 1852. She died at Torquay 8th December 1904, leaving £2,557-1/-1d to her brother, Francis. At the turn of the century both sisters were living in Torquay and like their brother they remained unmarried.

The marble gravestone of the Reverend Francis Sanders (in remarkably good condition) is large and quite a grand affair, decorated with a variant of a cross flory (or fleury) with engraved outline of a chalice and a prayer book,

the latter closed with a metal clasp. A Latin inscription, fitting for an Antiquary, lies within a border encompassing the lengthy cross, lettered in a Gothic font as follows :

South side :

MEMENTO FRANCIS SANDERS, A.M. E. COLL. NOU : OXON : F.S.A. HUIUS PAROCHIAE PAR-

West end :

-OCHI PER XXI ANNOS

North side :

OB DORMIUIT IN XTO XXIV^o DIE NOV : ANO DNI MCMXII, AETATIS LXVII^o. PECCATOR SUB

East end :

CRUCE LUCEM EXSPECTAT.

Translation :

Memory Francis Sanders, M.A. e[ducated] New College, Oxford, F.S.A. Here Parish Pastor for 21 years. Fell asleep in Christ 24th day November anno domini 1912 age 67. (See Note No. 7) Sinner under [the] Cross, waiting for the light.



The fine oak panelling on the north wall of the sanctuary in St. Hildeburgh's, was erected in 1914 in memory of the Reverend Francis Sanders. Those either side of the altar to Isabel Higgins (died 1908), and P. C. Eaton (died 1897). The three panels are not connected or related. ¹¹

The carved and gilded initials of the Vicar, 'F. S.' are repeated five times, three in the carved foliage upper border, and again at the top of each of the end panels. There are nine panels in all, the middle one cut away to make an elaborate lectern for a holy book. At the head of panels three, five and seven, there is a finely carved and gilded chalice and prayer book. These symbols are echoes from the carving on the gravestone of the Reverend Sanders in Holy Trinity churchyard (see above). The Latin inscription across eight of the nine panels, about a third of the way up from the marbled Sanctuary floor, also reflect the Gothic lettering and wording around the edge of the gravestone although the wording differs in certain respects. The English translation reads :

[In] Memory of Francis Sanders M.A. Educated New College, Oxford. Here Ecclesiastical (Church) Consecrated 21 September 1899. Author / and here Parish Pastor 1891-1912. Died 27 November aged 67. (See Note No. 7)

In the four panels left-hand side :

MEMENTOTE FRANCI SANDERS A.M. E COLL : NOU : OXON : HUIUS
ECCLIE CONSECATÆ 21 SEP : 1899 AUCTORIS

In the four panels right-hand side :

ET HUIUS PAROCHLÆ PAROCHI 1891-1912. OB : 27 NOV : ÆTAS : 67



In the picture above, the splendour of the memorial to the Rev. Francis Sanders, with its nine oak panels, is clearly seen. Note the Vicar's initials skilfully carved and high-lighted in gold, together with the three sets of chalice and prayer books, all set against a finely carved array of oak leaves and acorns. The beauty of the latter can be appreciated in the second photograph. The shield carved above and set in the middle panel above the lectern, bears the gilded initials IHS beneath a crown. ¹²





The grave in Holy Trinity churchyard of the Rev. Francis Sanders (1846-1912) and the plaque in memory of his two sisters, both of whom died in 1904.



NOTES

- 1 Oliff George Sanders was born in January 1851, and in 1875 he was still living in England, but some-time later he had moved to Sydney, New South Wales. He died in Australia in his mid-thirties on the 6th September 1885 and was buried in Pioneers Memorial Park, Sydney. By occupation he was a solicitor.

- 2 *Alumni Oxonienses : the Members of the University of Oxford, 1715-1886*, by Joseph Foster. London : Parker & Co., (1888-1892) in 4 volumes.

- 3 Perpetual Curates were chiefly common during the first half of the 19th century, their legal status being an administrative anomaly dating back to the 16th century. Generally, they tended to be of uncertain social standing, and, probably more importantly to them, they were poorly paid. In most cases they were a thing of the past after 1868, but it appears that Hoylake continued the practice, at least until the Reverend Sanders was appointed in 1891.

- 4 William Fergusson Irvine was father of Birkenhead-born Andrew ‘Sandy’ Irvine (1902-1924) pictured right, who lost his life on Mount Everest during the British Expedition of 1924. Together with his climbing partner, George Mallory, Irvine disappeared while attempting the first ascent of Everest somewhere on the mountain’s north-east ridge, last sighted only a few hundred yards from the summit. Mallory’s body was



discovered in 1999, but Andrew Irvine's remains have never been found. There is a memorial window to the pair in Chester Cathedral. (Pictured above).

- 5 Incunábula : books printed before 1501. Refers to books produced in the infancy of printing. From the Latin 'things in the cradle'.
- 6 STC : *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English books printed abroad 1475-1640* compiled by A. W. Pollard & G. R. Redgrave. Bibliographical Society, 1926 (with a later revised edition).

Wing : Short-Title Catalogue of Books printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and British America, and of English Books printed in other Countries 1641-1700. Compiled by Donald Wing of Yale University Library – Vol. I 1945, Vol. II 1948, Vol. III 1951. (A continuation to 1700 of STC).
- 7 Reverend Sanders was born in July 1846 and died in November 1912, so he was aged 66 at the time of his death. (This is confirmed in the Civil Registration Death Index 1837-1915). His gravestone, however, reads 67 (LXVII), so this is either an error (not that unusual on gravestones) or it refers to the fact that the Vicar was in his 67th year. The panel in St. Hildeburgh's follows suit and incorrectly states "67".
- 8 Probate took place in London on the 16th January 1913, and Francis Sanders left effects amounting to £1,422-5/-1d to (1) his sister, Ellen Zilpah Ashby, a widow who had married George Ashby at Brighton in 1883. Ellen died at Surbiton, Surrey, 26th May 1932. (2) To his nephew John Francis Ashby, a solicitor. (See below).
- 9 John Francis Ashby was born at Ratby, Leicestershire, in 1886 where his father had farmed 65 acres of land at Grange Farm, Leicester Forest. In company with his brother George William (see below), he came to Hoylake to reside at the Vicarage with his uncle, Reverend Francis Sanders, where, on the 28th October 1909, he became a Freemason in the Hilbre Lodge. A solicitor by profession, he was living at 8, Prussia Road, Hoylake at the outbreak of hostilities in 1914. (Prussia Road was later changed to Queens Road owing to the hatred towards Germany during the Great War). He entered the 1st Battalion, Cheshire Regiment, and, with the rank of lieutenant he went to France in 1915. John Francis Ashby survived the war, but he suffered from shell shock and after being demobbed he was left with severe mental disabilities. On the 4th May he was admitted to Northumberland Street Workhouse, Westminster, then being used as a Military Detention Barracks. He was only there for a few days as on the 7th May 1920 he was discharged into Camberley House, Peckham, a Lunatic Asylum, where he died, aged 34, just over a week later, on the 16th May 1920. He left £1,837-2/-10d (a fair sum in those days – over £82,500 today), to his sister, Miss Oliff Margery Ashby (born at Ratby in 1885).
- 10 Captain George William Ashby, 6th (City of London) Battalion, the London Regiment (Rifles. Territorial Force), was the younger son of the late William Ashby (1830-1895), of The Old Hayes, Ratby, Leicestershire ; and Ellen Zilpah, widow, living at 9, Shalton Villas, Surbiton. George William Ashby was born at The Old Hayes, 15th September 1887. He went to live in Hoylake with his uncle, Reverend Francis Sanders (probably following the death of his father) and was educated at Caldby Grammar School where he was made Head Boy. He obtained a nomination for Liverpool College (Upper School), Lodge Lane, Liverpool, when

he was aged 16. He represented his school in football and cricket and passed the Oxford and Cambridge Higher Board Examinations with distinction but appears to have entered the Civil Service straight from school and was employed by the War Office. He obtained a commission as 2nd Lieutenant in the 6th London T.A. in August 1910 ; promoted Lieutenant 1st February 1913 ; and Captain 17th May 1915. He volunteered on the outbreak of war in 1914, and was sent to France in March 1915, fighting in the Battle of Festubert and in other engagements. He was killed in action during the attack on Loos on the 25th September 1915. He was leading his company down a lane, the German wire having been cut by our artillery, and had almost reached the enemy trench when they came up against uncut wire. Captain George William Ashby fell, riddled with machine-gun fire, while attempting to cut his way through. His battalion went on and took and held the German trench but suffered heavy casualties. George William Ashby lies buried in Maroc British Cemetery, Grenay, France. (Special Memorial 89). His name is also inscribed on the Ratby war memorial.

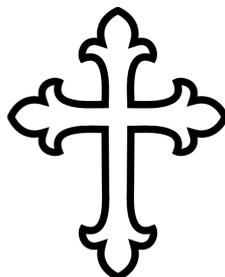
- 11 See *West Kirby & Hilbre ; A Parochial History* by John Brownbill. Liverpool : Henry Young & Sons, Ltd., 12, South Castle Street, 1928. (P.250). In fact, Brownbill records the name of Mr. Eaton incorrectly, giving his initials as “P. E.,” whereas it should be ‘P. C.’

Philip Charles Eaton was the son of Canadian-born George Henry Eaton, a solicitor, and his wife, Caroline Eaton. Philip Charles was baptized at Willaston on the 13th August 1892. Sadly, he died in Hoylake at the tender age of five on the 3rd May 1897. The panel in the sanctuary to the right of the altar is dedicated to his memory with a carved gilt inscription and his initials, ‘P. C. E.’ interwoven in wood into the edging of the panel.

The slightly plainer oak panel to the left of the altar is dedicated to the memory of Isabella Higgins of 44, Prussia Road (now Queens Road), Hoylake, who died on the 25th April 1908. A brass plate at the foot of the panel reads : “In Memoriam. Isabel Higgins. April 25th 1908.” Miss Higgins was born in Liverpool, the daughter of William Higgins, born c.1802, a Liverpool cotton broker. She was baptized at St. Peter’s (where Woolworth’s once stood in Church Street) on the 1st April 1852, the family moving over the water to Birkenhead when Isabella was a child.

My thanks to Nigel Hall for drawing my attention to Brownbill’s reference, and for taking photographs. The two photographs taken inside St. Hildeburgh’s are Nigel’s handiwork. I would also like to thank Manuel Mendoza from Long Beach, California, an experienced Latin & Greek scholar who confirmed my translation of the Latin inscriptions.

- 12 I.H.S. – Iesus Hominum Salvator – from the Greek ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΗΜΕΤΕΡΟΣ ΣΩΤΗΡ – Jesus, Saviour of Men – used as a Christian monogram symbolizing Christ.



Answers to the quiz questions on page 11

{1} The railway arrived at Hoylake in 1866 – on the 18th January 1866 to be precise. The coming of the railway heralded a new era of development with grand houses for the wealthy and a holiday destination for all.

{2} Workmen in 1864 found a skeleton while repairing the embankment at Leasowe. The bones of ‘Leasowe Man’, or ‘The Prehistoric Man of Cheshire’, have, however, been recently radiocarbon-dated to between 1600 and 1900 years old, so this man lived during the Roman occupation. (There will be an article on this find in the next issue of the *Dispatch*.)



{3} Lewis Carroll visited Brimstage Hall and there in the chapel he espied a small carved stone corbel carved with an image of a smiling cat from which he derived his famous grinning feline in *Alice in Wonderland*.

{4} Wirral – ‘Birthplace of England’ because of the Battle of Brunanburh (Bromborough) in 937. This bloodiest of combats brought together for the first time the might and power of the English forces in which to fight the combined armies of Norway and Scotland.

{5} Leasowe Lighthouse – built in 1763 (this date is to be found over the door) and is the oldest brick-built lighthouse in Great Britain.

{6} The Red Noses & Yellow Noses are part of the original coastline at New Brighton. These sandstone rocks were more evident before the construction of the marine promenade in 1906, but a small portion of the Noses can still be seen. The Yellow Noses contained caves and extensive tunnels said to have been used by smugglers.

{7} *Conway* : three ships of the name from 1859 to 1941. The final vessel was moved to Menai Straits owing to German bombing and was wrecked in 1953. *Indefatigable* : two ships, 1865-1912 & 1914-1941. Like *Conway*, she trained boys for the Royal Navy & Merchant Navy and was moved to Anglesey in 1941, later established ashore on the island. *Akbar* : Liverpool Protestant Reformatory Ship, 1856-1907. Moved ashore to Heswall. *Clarence* : Liverpool Roman Catholic Reformatory Ship. Two ships – 1864-1884 & 1885-1899. Both vessels were deliberately set on fire and sunk by the boys, some of whom were sentenced to penal servitude. Both reformatory vessels experienced serious mutinies and other problems arising from unrest.

{8} Glenda Jackson, CBE, born in Birkenhead in 1936 and educated at West Kirby Grammar School. She first played Elizabeth I in the 1971 television series for which she received two Emmy Awards ; and again in the same year in the film *Mary, Queen of Scots*. Her parents lived in Alderley Road, Hoylake.

{9} Joseph Bruce Ismay built Dawpool Hall, Thurstaston, in the 1860s. His grand-father founded Ismay, Imrie & Co., and his father established White Star with Bruce Ismay becoming its chairman in 1899. He was onboard *Titanic* when it sank in 1912

and was accused of cowardice by taking a place in the all too few lifeboats. In order to improve his view of the Dee, he had the Hoylake Chester route (A540 Telegraph Road) diverted through the sandstone cutting in use today. The road no longer ran into Heswall ('lower') village and led to the development of the 'upper' village. Dawpool Hall was demolished in 1927.

{10} The 'Dungeon' is a shallow gorge located off the Wirral Way between Thurstaston and Heswall. The name is derived from the old English 'Dunge' or 'Denge' meaning Marsh.



Hoylake-born Stan Hugill (1906-1992) Britain's last Shantyman

Stan Hugill was born in the Coastguard Station at Hoylake on the 19th November 1906. His father, Henry James Hugill, was born in Winkleigh, Devon, in 1873, and at the age of 15 he had joined the Royal Navy at Devonport, serving until 1914, (although he had been ashore for a few years and employed in the Coastguard) when he was found medically unfit for war service. Nevertheless, he lived until 1951, moving over to Blundellsands Coastguard Station shortly after his son was born.

Stan Hugill followed in his father's footsteps and went to sea in 1922 although he chose the Merchant Navy. He began his sea-life, which was to last until 1945, in deep-sea square-riggers. Here he found he had the necessary voice to sing sea shanties as the capstan was worked to weigh anchor, or hauling was required and working songs made such tasks easier. He served aboard the last British commercial sailing ship, the celebrated Cape Horner *Garthpool*, and in her he suffered shipwreck when the vessel met her end off the Cape Verde Islands in November 1929. In the early years of the Second World War he was captured by the Germans and spent 4 ½ years as a POW. After the war he taught at the Outward Bound School at Aberdyfi (1950-1975), but spent some time back at sea under sail singing shanties aboard the lofty *Pamir*. He was not in her during her final tragic voyage in 1957 when the barque capsized and only 4 seamen and 2 cadets survived. Stan Hugill was a talented linguist which was put to good use when he began to record international sea shanties before they were lost forever. He wrote six books, the best-known being *Shanties from the Seven Seas* (1961) ; and *Sailortown* (1967) as well as making many recordings and videos. He died in 1992 at Aberystwyth at the age of 85.



Editor's Endnote :

My thanks to Michael Barritt & Sheila Saunders for their welcome contributions to this issue, and to Nigel Hall and Manuel Mendoza for their kind assistance.

I hope readers will enjoy this 'bumper' issue.

Michael Nash.

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