

Articles appearing in the “Hoylake Free Press”
on “Changes”
in the History of Hoylake in 50 years
Written by Charles Roberts, a Native of the Place,
In 1914 – 1915
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These Articles were written and appeared without proofs being submitted, hence slight errors, in many instances, in Spelling, Wording etc.

C.R.

Acknowledgements

These articles were originally typed without the benefits of a modern day word processor. The typed copy was scanned using a text processing package and proof checked against the original document.

Some spelling and other errors have been retained for authenticity. In the original document “Contribution No. 15” or rather its heading has also been omitted. It is also unfortunate that Charles Roberts (or the copyist) did not see fit to attribute the contributions to the people whose reminiscences they were. The source document is a typed copy probably dating from the 1950’s though some spelling errors have been corrected, care was taken not to add further errors during this later transcription.

The processed document was then indexed. Inconsistencies within the index due to wording and spelling of names in the text were corrected in the index to prevent spurious duplication. For example “Meols” and “Meolse” always appear as “Meols” in the index though Meolse has been left in the text. Where names appear as say “John Smith” and the same person is later referred as “Mr Smith” the index entry is consistently “Smith, John”; the text is unchanged.

An addendum section has been added to relate Victorian Hoylake as remembered in 1914-15 to the Hoylake of today. The information for this section is taken from personal memories of life in Hoylake between 1950 and 1962 together with further reading and recent visits to Hoylake; that is research.

Any publications used in research are listed in the bibliography section. Information has generally been taken from these publications rather than directly quoted.

Gordon Eve-Tatham, 2009

HOYLAKE FREE PRESS

OCTOBER 28th.. 1914

CHANGE !

There are very few districts to our knowledge which have changed so rapidly as ours has done. From a primitive village -mainly consisting of fishermen's cottages — it has in very little over a quarter of a century grown to the moderate town of the present time. Many people of course are cognoscente of the progress made, having seen it evolve; but there are hundreds others living here who know the place only as it is. To both we believe a descriptive account of the changes and progress made during the last fifty years will be of considerable interest, and we intend for the next month or two to write articles bearing upon this subject.

There will be many residents who know the district even better than we do, and if such care to give us any further particulars of Old Hoylake, or these articles bring to mind old reminiscences, we will gladly welcome contributions or correspondence dealing with same.

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CONTRIBUTION No.1.

Prior to the advent of the railway the only means of access to and from the town was by the old-fashioned omnibus drawn by three horses, by private conveyance or on foot, and at this time it was not infrequent for residents to walk to Birkenhead and back, trusting to a friendly 'lift' by a passing carriage or cart on the journey.

The omnibus left the Green Lodge Hotel at eight o'clock in the morning, picking up its passengers en route, and returning in the evening about six o'clock; the journey occupied just about an hour, the fare being a shilling each way. In the summer time a seat in the bus was not always to be relied upon, then of course, the alternative being "walk it". Many passengers, on the return journey, in order to secure a seat adopted the practice of going early and sitting in the bus at the stables of the Woodside Hotel hours before the time of departure. In fine weather, naturally, the passage was delightful, but oh, those wintry storms - inside packed like herrings, the atmosphere (fortunately germs and microbes were unknown in those days) and rocked to and fro like the "cradle of the deep". Outside those who had to brave the elements were prepared with clothing of a substantial nature many clad with shawls crossed shepherd-like and very picturesque in appearance.

The main road was fairly good, but being under a turnpike trust with its usual gates or barriers where vehicles pulled up to pay the old lady or gentleman toll-keeper the fee charged to all vehicles (of these gates there were two, one at Bidston Hill and the other at Four Lane Ends, Saughall Massie), much inconvenience was caused as in the dark, cold wintry nights, and the gates closed, the toll keeper might probably be having forty winks alongside a good fire, consequently the difficulty was to arouse the slumberer to come and open the gate for the passage of the coach, and as there was no guard a considerable amount of shouting and "halloas" was required to waken up this turnpike guardian. Of course at Moreton, the usual stage call was made at the "Coach and Horses" not for refreshments, oh no, but collection of fares, and as all Hoylakians were honest men and women there was no attempt to evade payment, the old driver never having any trouble in this respect, not even to get down from his

perch. No doubt, "Old Tommy the Busman" such was the driver's name, was like "Dame Margery", 'took a little of something to keep out the cold.'

Arriving at Hoylake the first stop was made at "Hoose Corner", Church Road, where most of the passengers alighted. Next stop was by Gibson's Stores, opposite the present Post Office, for here ended the village and from this point until you got to the Green Lodge all was fields and common, no dwelling houses beyond some fishermen's thatched cottages mentioned later. Passengers intended for Lake Place dropped off here ; the scene was then, on the right, corn and potato fields; you crossed over a wooden stile, proceeded through these fields along a footpath, what is now the first portion of Lake Place, until you came to a spot - now the beginning of Valentia Road; here was another wooden stile on the top of a very big sand hill, then you were in Lake Place, represented by the present row of dwellings which includes the "Lake Inn" but in front of these was nothing but sand hills until you came to the Upper Lighthouse, not the present one, a description of which will be noted later.

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CONTRIBUTION No.2.

The bus being relieved of more passengers, went on its way with its jaded nags to its journey's end. Passing Carr Lane on the left (now Cable Road South and Mr. W. Ingham's shop) this was the direct road to Newton and Frankby, but the arrival of the railway cut this in twain and the road was diverted to its present position round the Gasworks. On one side, the site of which is Dent's Café, stood the first thatched cottage, tenanted by an old lady named, singular to say, "Betty Brewer" – no relation to "Mr. William". On the opposite side of the road between Cable Road and "Queens Road" there were several thatched cottages standing wall back and nicely situated, tenanted by fisherman, old Joseph Armitage, Joey Powell, Bobby Parr and others. There they mended their nets and tanned the sails of the "Grabs", (three-masted small fishing boats used in winter for shrimping and in the summer for spawning.) Proceeding further on the opposite side was the Montrose Farm in the occupation of a fine old stamp of yeoman, William Croxton, grandfather of A.T. Salvidge. Still further was one more thatched cottage in which the family of Roach lived, the Congregational Church now stands on the site. In the rear of the cottage was the usual pen fold or pound, where the stray and trespassing cattle were impounded. Of this there are some people living still in Hoylake having some very interesting reminiscences, but we must not tell tales.

Were we downhearted those days - no, for although the travelling was not first, second or third we did not complain. To-day we hear nothing but grumbles and growls against the poor old "Wirral Railway". Compare the past!

The foregoing is a brief description of the main street, Market Street as it was then! Years passed and little progress was made. The old-time village practically stood for years as described. Then came the railway, about 1866. To get to Hoylake from Liverpool then, one had to cross the Mersey on the Ferry, take horse tram to a point near the present Docks Station, Birkenhead, and entrain on what was then called the Seacombe, Hoylake and Deeside Railway - a very slow journey run at infrequent intervals. In later years this was changed to the Wirral Railway which now maintains a splendid service of trains all the year round. Of course, even now there is much grumbling, but we really don't think that beyond perhaps certain inconveniences which may happen from time to time that there is any real ground for complaint. We certainly would like to see the line electrified but this is for the future. In the meantime patience prevails.

Arrived at Hoylake Station - an old light-coloured wooded structure - superseded some years ago by the present building - one was confronted with quite a rural outlook. Facing the station stood Croxtons' Farm (already referred to) It stood in a field which now the Garage, Town Hall and Gardens, and the Quadrant stand upon, and directly opposite the house was the inevitable old-fashioned pump. On the West Kirby side of the farm was an orchard and right across could be seen the Stanley Hotel.

From here the Golf Links opened out, without any fences whatever, and right from what is now termed "the big lamp" one could go almost anywhere on the links (or the "Green" as it was then called). Near this point, abutting on the Green, a white cottage occupied by Mr. John Little, a custom house officer, later occupied by Mr. John Cookson, who worked on the railway; this house is still standing and is entered from Meols Drive, opposite Airlie Road. A few yards further along stood "the Old Grand Stand" (Hoylake Green having previously been used as a race course, and very popular with Liverpool people too). Facing this and about opposite "Esperanza" was a very fine cricket pitch, where large numbers of the elite of the neighbourhood assembled to watch the matches on Saturdays. The Green ran to the edge of King's Gap (which was merely a sandy lane), and where St. Hildeburgh's Church now stands was an old bowling green with a wall round a pavilion of a kind upon it, in which it is said more drink was consumed than in the Green Lodge Hotel opposite. Stanley Road was merely a sandy way leading to the Hills and Red Rocks past the Royal Hotel (occupied by the Ball family) then a much smaller building (the later addition being quite visible even now to the observant eye). There were abutting on this way one or two houses for instance, The Gothic Towers, Greenham and Dormi Cottages. In Barton Road (another sandy way), the East and West Chases stood with their lodges in front as now and Beach House and another.

Leaving this scene let us wander down King's Gap (a road which is supposed to have obtained its name through King William III having embarked with his troops from there in June 1689 to suppress a rebellion in Ireland. In this road there were only about four houses, near the bottom. One faced the shore at the corner, the other two being those between it and Marine Road. On the opposite side was Mr. Charles Cook's residence, later Mr. George Cook's (now Rossett House School) and grounds. Here a fine stud of horses were kept with packs of hounds used for hunting in the surrounding country. At the corner of the Gap and Barton Road stood a small white cottage and yard - once a coal yard with weighing machine, occupied by a Jackie Parr, and later by Bob Blundell. This coal yard was supplied with coal by flats which landed at the foot of the Gap, and from there it was carted up in vehicles of all kinds, even wheelbarrows being used.

Arriving on the shore a fine view met the eye. At low tide there was always a good depth of water, a hundred yards or so wide. Here the "big boats" anchored right up to where Beach Road now is, the old "Harlequeen", (captain - Thos. Jones, father of Mrs. Pownall, who has just passed away) occupying the most westward mooring. From Government Road to opposite the new baths the Grabs anchored. Here we must abide for another week.

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CONTRIBUTION No.3.

Addition to last contribution. The "Ship Inn" was originally the property of the "Crofts" family, and many will remember one of the sons in old Daniel Crofts. They sold to "Brosters" and the late Joseph Broster, farmer of Market Street, transferred to the present owner.

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Picking up our thread of description we may look from the King's Gap along the shore eastwards. We will find no houses until we come to the Lighthouse. The frontage sloped from sand hills right down to the seashore, with no promenade; but, when building operations commenced in King's Gap, Lord Stanley erected a sea wall of stone extending to where the Alderley Road Shelter now is. On the construction of the present promenade the wall was absorbed and disappeared.

The Lighthouse at this period was a different structure than the present, being built of brick, and rather a massive dwelling house type of building, with a semi-circular front at the top containing the lantern. The lighthouse keeper was Henry Bird (whose relatives and family still remain with us). An excellent print of this lighthouse appears in Mrs. Hilda Gamlin's interesting book "Twixt Mersey and Dee".

On the seashore and at the foot of the lighthouse was the old lifeboat house and many were the stirring scenes witnessed at the launching of the boat on its errand of mercy. Wrecks were more frequent in those days than these, by reason of there being more vessels depending only on their sails, and of course easily being rendered helpless in the powerful gales. The coxswain at this time was "Old George Davies" a fine type of a fisherman, who is well represented by his son George, now over 70 years of age, known as "Goldie Davies", and if anyone cares to hear some good old interesting and humorous yarns about Hoylake and the fishing industry, we recommend them to "George".

We cannot leave this spot without calling to remembrance "Davies Gap". This was located where Mr. Muir's house, Cain's house and stables, and Marine Road stands. It was a large, extensive hollow, flat, covered with a fine green sod and surrounded with sand hills, covered with mell'star' grass. Here fishermen mended nets, made wicker baskets and pouches to carry shrimps and fish, whilst the villagers used the position for cricket, quoits and other games. In the summer evenings it was used by visitors for archery. The straw targets, canvas face, with the bull's eye painted circular coloured rings resting on iron tripods gave considerable interest to the watchers, observing the flight of the arrows strung from the bows of the lady and gentlemen archers. "Davies Gap" was also the favourite resort on Sunday afternoons to listen to open-air "preachers". The hills providing comfortable seatings, the preacher could be heard with ease, whilst the singing of hymns was heartily joined in by a large congregation; the speakers were usually laymen, and sometimes members of merchant families of Liverpool.

Looking from this point towards West Kirby, we see the Upper Lighthouse, which stood where the present one stands. The "Upper" was the opposite in structure to the "Lower" being of the type of Leasowe, tall and circular. To make way for the present and modern building, the Upper had to come down and drastic measures were taken to secure its fall, not brick by brick. It was undermined by removing some 10 or 12 feet of material on one side at the base, substituted by props of wood, which at the time were set on fire, and as the building lost its support, down it came in a whole mass. The keeper of this lighthouse was James Lee, a member of another old Hoylake family.

We must here again call to remembrance the thatched cottage and, gardens which existed nearby. It was occupied by a well-known personage, "John Thomas". No one would think that there ever existed in this locality, a grove of trees, with land under cultivation, yet it was so. "Old John Thomas" and his wife resided in the cottage, delightfully situated amongst flowery garden, screened with trees and surrounded with a fence or cop made of sand and grass sods. Dr. Paul, the eminent surgeon, built his house in a portion of the land and has retained most of the garden whilst Queen's Road runs through the site.

“Old John” was of Welsh descent and although he had travelled much as a sailor, he never shook off the accent of his native land. Small in stature, he was of sturdy build and was the possessor of much intelligence, which made him a great favourite with the gentry. His advent to Hoylake was as one of the King’s officers, to prevent smuggling, and when this position was superseded by the Coastguards Old John retired with a pension. But John did not retire from labour for he became a man of importance, and was appointed assistant overseer for Little Meolse Township, also steward to Lord Stanley. Old John and his wife lived to good old ages and died respected by all, their descendants being now the “Grisdale” family. Mr. Morrison, the present official succeeded to the office, what is now a most important position. Old John would carry his demand notes inside his hat and it was amusing to see the old man take off his hat if it happened to be a windy day. We are afraid Mr. Morrison could not carry out his work in this primitive way in these days, so largely are increased the duties.

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CONTRIBUTION No. 4.

Travelling from the Lower Lighthouse along the shore we find a blank until we come to the “Dale”, now no more. The Parade, Bank and Lake Roads had no existence but consisted of sand hills in an enclosure known as “the new piece”. Originally the “Dale” was a hotel; subsequently it became the residence of the parson and Liverpool Merchants respectively, being prettily situated, enveloped completely and hidden by a bolt of sand hills, it formed an ideal residence. The Oddfellows and Shepherds Clubs (Friendly Societies) made this their first call on the Anniversary or Annual Meeting. Accompanied ‘by a Brass Band the youths and maidens danced to the strains of music on the lawn, and in the summer the Sunday School children assembled in the grounds for their customary tea party or treat.

It was approached from Church Road by means of a drive and at the entrance stood the Coachman’s cottage. Nearly all its residents possessed horses and carriages, and the owners were held in great respect by the villagers, but all this has gone and the march of progress to the district demands the site for more dwellings and residences. We have two families still resident amongst us who were occupants, viz.- the “Wignalls” and “Wrigleys”.

Between the Dale and “Sandhey” which still survives, came another range of sand hills; then “Sand-hey” another ancient landmark. On account of the encroaching sea it became necessary for the owner, Mr. John Ralph Shaw (also of Arrowe Hall), to construct a stone embankment at a considerable cost to prevent the sea washing the residence away; and on the shore hundreds of wooden sticks- driven into the ground, fastened together - were required to break the force of the sea waves dashing on to the stone embankment. As in the case of Lord Stanley’s sea-wall, this embankment was swallowed up by the present promenade. Whilst in residence, John Ralph Shaw Esq., the owner, was High Sheriff of Cheshire and on the morning of his departure in state to meet the Judges of Assize at Chester, all the school children and residents assembled along the entrance drive to witness the High Sheriff leave in his coach with coachman and groom in their powdered wigs and gay uniforms, and other attendant officials in the rear of the carriage wearing velvet knee breeches, silk stockings, buckled shoes, three-cornered hats and other fancy attire.

Beyond Sand-hey on the sand hills, we had the mortuary and pen fold, commonly called “the dead house” where reposed the unfortunate victims of the treacherous sea thrown up on to the neighbouring sandbanks from the numerous wrecks to await the Coroner’s Inquest. Near to was and still remains the “White House” tenanted for many years by the “Housley” family. Not far distant was “Banks”, of the

“Warren House” still remaining, and its very aspect shows the structure to be one of the oldest in the district. At this period the house stood many hundreds of yards inland from the Lake, but the sea year by year swept away the coast - the construction of the promenade and the recent addition of the Leasowe Embankment only preserving it from destruction. The surroundings were known as the “rabbit warren” for rabbits were here in abundance.

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CONTRIBUTION No.5.

Having given an outline of the changes which have taken place from West to East, we think we may retrace our steps and note the various changes in Great Meols, and then continue with Hoose and Little Meolse. Of course a great deal might be written of a historical character. Reference could be made to the name of “Meolse”, the name of a family who were once the possessors of the place, the sub-marine forest with its many relics, tokens and coins unearthed by the sea; The Manor House said to have existed in a spot now in the possession of the sea; a windmill and the Upper Mockbeggar Lighthouse; but as we do not aspire to writing history our readers must be content with the object we had in view when commencing these articles, viz. “Changes”.

We might fairly call to attention however, that Great Meolse until recent years remained completely at a standstill. At the beginning of the last century it was much larger in population than Hoose and Little Meolse, yet whilst in the last 50 years both, these places have increased rapidly, it was not until some 15 years ago that Great Meolse began to develop. This may be accounted for in the fact that Little Meolse was leasehold, and land could be got on more advantageous lines than the freehold of Great Meolse; consequently whilst Little Meolse was mapped out, planned and developed, there was no demand for freehold land in Great Meolse. As Little Meolse filled up with its beautiful residences, Great Meolse opportunity came and the owners of the land are now slowly and steadily disposing of building sites. Demand is increasing and Great Meolse will soon be a favourite residential neighbourhood. No business premises, we understand, will be erected for some years. Up to about 40 years ago the township was purely agricultural with a sprinkling of a few gentlemen’s dwellings; there was no place of worship or schools; the parishioners having to journey to the Hoylake Parish Church, and in those days the attendance of the farmers and their families was remarkable, both morning and evening.

Education was obtained at the Hoylake National Schools, and the children, with great regularity, attended winter and summer. The accent of the children was real good old Cheshire, and was quite distinctive from the Hoylake natives, but what an improvement has taken place in this respect. To those who remember this period the change is most marked. Meolse was noted for its strong Conservative principles; at one time only two liberals were to be found, and it can be remembered that, at one election the whole of the “Tories” came up to the polling booth in a solid body of 60 or 70, with party colours adorning the coat lapel.

It is rather singular, but nevertheless true, that whilst there were no shops, and the inhabitants limited in numbers, Great Meolse possessed three fully licensed houses and at a later period an additional beerhouse, whereas now with the great increase of population there is only one, the Railway Inn. Yet no one would suggest that the farmers were given to excess drinking. On the contrary they were all a sober, industrious and highly respectable set of men.

The Stonebridge Cottage was a public, opposite to the residence of Councillor English; further on was another which gave place to the present Railway Inn; then came the "Sloop Inn" very picturesque in its thatch; this still remains but without a license in the vicinity of St. John the Baptist's Church; on the sand hills opposite Carlton Terrace existed the "Iron House" beerhouse, built of corrugated, iron.

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CONTRIBUTION No .6.

Before we continue further with these articles we think it desirable for the benefit of the younger generation, and for the information of the newer residents, that we should give the constitution of "Hoylake" as known at this period. If you were to ask a native where and what he considered Hoylake he would probably reply from Carlton Terrace to "Up the Green" so meaning from Carlton Terrace in Great Meols, the Hoose Village to King's Gap, and beyond to the Royal Hotel; this, then, is what was at that time considered Hoylake, so from this point of view only a part of Gt. Meols belonged to Hoylake. Strictly there was no such place as Hoylake, but it was made up and composed of three townships, Great Meols on the East, Hoose the fishing village and most populous in the centre, with Little Meols on the West. On the formation of the Local Board for the district however, the whole three townships were combined and now form one township, Hoylake-cum-West Kirby. Hoylake, therefore is Hoylake now in reality. It will be noticed that our spelling of Gt. Meolse does not agree with "Meols" at the Railway Station. The additional 'e' is perfectly correct, and the pronunciation should be as in "Meolse". Anyone who cares to examine historical records will find we are right. The incorrect "Meols" arose through the efforts of one of the earlier Railway managers, who, having heard of "Meols", near Southport and setting up a sort of superior intelligence, came to the conclusion that "Meols" at Southport was the same as our "Meolse" and accordingly erected his board. at the Railway station; in nine cases out of ten strangers make violent attempts at the pronunciation, calling it Meols. Now we know that the Lancashire name has no connection in the slightest degree with the Cheshire, its pronunciation being distinctly different and, we certainly think the District Council or Advertising Committee should insist on having the name correctly restored.

As we mentioned in a previous article Great Meolse has only of recent years advanced, so that up to the present it still retains the ancient roads and most of the old houses. We shall therefore not find any changes except in the increased number of new houses. Before the Station or the Meolse Bridge were constructed there was a small one-storey cottage on the side of the main road., which was occupied by one, Daniel Croft, the site of which is now Mr. Fergus Smith's abode. In Fornal's Green Lane there were no houses but the late Daniel Croft migrated to there and built most, if not all, of the present cottages.

Another change, but only in name is that of the "Cow Lane", now merged into Park Road and forms the entrance near the Railway Inn. Park Road was formerly Park Lane, but when a certain enterprising local builder commenced operations he decided to advance the locality, so dropped the "rural" lane and gave it the title of an "urban" road. In Park Road we still have the thatched cottage and dwelling of a very old family, the "Langleys". Near to - but some years back destroyed by fire - were also other thatched cottages occupied by the "Grace" family. This ground is now taken up by nice semi-detached villas. "Washington's House, The Elms", so named from the two magnificent elm trees at the entrance remains, and the appearance points it out to be one of "ye olden times" • We think we ought to give here a place to a perfectly true and humorous joke perpetrated by the late Mr. Macdona of West Kirby, M.P. for Rotherhithe, in reference to the Washingtons' House. A certain Yankee friend whilst on a visit to Mr. Macdona was taken round by him to view places of interest in the Meolse region, and on coming

to the "Elms" the host paused and dramatically pointed it out to the American as the birthplace of the "great George Washington" famous in the history of America. The Yank was of course, naturally very much elated, and went away cherishing the memory of the idol of all Americans, and it was only on arrival back home in the States, when he startled his friends by this discovery, that he learned much to his discomfiture, that he had been the victim of a huge joke at the hands of a member of the British House of Commons.

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CONTRIBUTION No.7.

On the main road opposite to the Railway Inn some more very ancient thatched cottages have disappeared, the property of another old Meolse family, Banks. Adjacent to the church of St. John the Baptist was another old thatch farm, tenanted for generations by the "Meadows" and alongside was still another old "thatch" the dwelling of the Hardman family, whose only representative now remaining being a well-known resident in Hoylake, "Old York Hardy". Still on the main road, nearer to Hoylake, stands the stone house now vacant and getting worse for wear, and waiting to make room for the builder and more palatial villas, once the home of old "George Meadows". On the opposite side is the "Redstone Farm" now in the occupation of the Misses Meadows, formerly the homestead of two old bachelor brothers, Henry and Robert Bennett; attached and on the front of the high road were thatched barns, stables and shippens, but in their place now stand the villa residence of Mr. Land and Messrs. George and Joseph Griffith.

There was supposed to be at one time a Manor of Meolse but nothing of any reliability can be found confirmatory of this, but it is within recollection that Mrs. Keightly, the largest owner of land claimed or tried to assert her claim to be "Lady of the Manor" but her title was always disputed. In those days there were some very wise old heads amongst the farmers, reference to some of whom may be found in subsequent contributions - who persistently opposed the claim.

As is well-known, there was a considerable amount of common land including a large area of sand hills which no one apparently owned, on which the farmers enjoyed privileges or pasturage for cattle and other easements, hence the resistance; there was once, however, an attempt some thirty years ago, made by the freeholders in Meolse to secure these commons and sand hills by enclosure, and a petition was drawn up in legal form for presentation to the Enclosure Commissioners praying that the commons, etc., might be enclosed, awarded and allotted out in proportion to the value owned by the respective freeholders. Unfortunately for them, but fortunately for the present ratepayers of Hoylake, one gentleman refused to join in the application, and no persuasion could prevail to alter his decision, resulting that, as the application had to be signed by the whole of the interested parties, the petition had to be abandoned with a loss to the freeholders, but with, as it proves to be, a considerable advantage to the neighbourhood; had this petition been completed and successful, Meolse would not have had the open spaces reserved for the future that it has now. On the contrary a good deal of land would have been enclosed and on coming into use for building purposes must have led to a lot of erratic erections with no defined lines or systematic development, giving only a chaos of mixed residences in character and architecture.

Arising out of the title of ownership before referred to, a novel attempt was once made by a man named "Snelson" to test the question of ownership. Snelson constructed a diminutive cottage of one storey in the sand hills opposite Carlton Terrace, on a flat stretch of land, which at this time was considerable in length and width, the present sand hills having been pushed back by the high winds and

nearly cover what was once a beautiful patch of grassy land., where at times the villagers or Hoosites had. revelry on the 5th of November, built the usual bonfire, the conflagration being witnessed by a large assembly of the inhabitants.

Snelson in a short time erected a cottage of brick with slate roof and took up his residence within, much to the dismay and chagrin of the Meolsemen, all of whom he set at defiance with an intimation that he would. soon proceed to further enlarge his territory. What was to be done? The remedy by the aid of the Legal Fraternity was soon discovered. An action for ejection was commenced by all the freeholders ending as it only could with Snelson being put to flight and. his diminutive cottage razed to the ground; his action, however, proved that no single individual possessed ownership of the commons, sand hills etc.

The whole of the commons and sand hills are now vested in the District Council, under the powers of their Act of Parliament and are, with certain limitations, plotted out for building sites.

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CONTRIBUTION No.8.

Snelson. in his action to acquire territory was more open than most of the other residents, For many years a good deal of poaching had been going on and for some time there was a little cribbing of land here, and a little enclosing there, that many other proprietors secretly increased their holdings. One “Magnate”, however, was a little too flagrant, and because some of his land had been taken by the sea, and other portions had been blown away by a succession of gales, he, on the principle that it was necessary for support to the remainder, took in common land. He extended his boundaries to such an extent that his neighbouring proprietors could not submit quietly, so the “Magnate” awoke one morning, and found the iron fencing removed and restored to its original position. This caused much comment at the time and was the subject of conversation for many weeks. On One occasion it was discussed on the Railway train, particularly by one landed proprietor, who was most vehement in his denunciation of his neighbour’s poaching expedition, when one of the passengers, in an accent, that was certainly not “Meolse” but of the same nationality as the grumbler, exclaimed., “Weel, Mr.---- , ah think ya did a wee bit of tha’ yer sel.” which brought forth the reply, “Well mon, ah just roounded the cawners”.

Before we leave Great Meolse, we think we ought to refer to some of the rulers of fifty years ago. Amongst these the principals were, John Sutton, Nathaniel Dawson, Price and Daniel Croft. These three men at this period were the influential leaders of the place. The most prominent undoubtedly, was John Sutton. John was considered the “King of Meolse” and. in all cases of difficulty or doubt “John” was the one to whom the farmers looked for advice, whilst he was ably supported by the others mentioned. John Sutton was tall, massive in build, and was the possessor of a good deal of intellectual ability. He was the parson’s right hand at the Parish Church for he filled the office of Churchwarden on several occasions, and was most regular and. attentive to his duties. As Waywarden of his township he interested himself in the highways or public roads, seeing that they secured their proper share of repair from the Highway Board, and at the meetings of this body, held at Hooton monthly, John was never conspicuous by his absence. On the contrary he was always present and. his colleagues held him in esteem and valued his opinion on matters appertaining to the Board’s work. For many years he served the office of Guardian of the Poor. Here again his abilities came into recognition and as in the case of the Highway Board, so was his attendance at the Board of Guardians, held at Clatterbridge. The poor had always a good friend in John Sutton! Another office he occupied was the Overseer of the Poor,

and. as there was no assistant overseer, the work fell to the Senior Overseer, and as that required clerical skill, this generally fell to his lot. Another important duty he discharged was that of representative on the Wallasey Embankment Commissioners, the overlooking of the Leasowe Embankment being his special care. In his younger days "John" assisted in the construction of the Embankment and on completion took to farming, being one of the most successful farmers of the township, occupying the farm now the residence of Mr. John Price. He eventually retired and lived quietly in Hoylake for many years, respected and humoured by all who knew him. His only son Mr. W. C. Sutton resides still in Meolse and follows in the lines of his father by giving his services to public work.

As this will be the last stage of the Meolse Changes before we travel on to "Hoose" we should like to point out the rapid melting away of the Sub-marine Forest, which, though it is referred to in history, will soon be a thing of the past, for, ever since the extension of the Embankment and the building of the promenade, the action of the sea has so concentrated in force as to sweep away at high tides the masses of the forest, and although we see it in reality now it will soon only be known by photographic pictures.

Meolse no doubt is a place of antiquity as shown by maps and writings and a place visited by strangers of note accompanied by the armies of men as is evidenced by the numerous curiosities and relics collected in the way of coins, buckles and other ancient ornaments, all of which amounting to some hundreds can be seen at the William Brown Library, Liverpool.

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CONTRIBUTION No.9.

On entering what was known as Hoylake, namely beyond Carlton Terrace, we find a great change and any former resident arriving here would be almost lost, for instead of the familiar sand hills on the one side, with a palisade of railway sleepers right up to Chapel Road, which was then necessary to prevent the sand drifting on to the main road, he would look upon villas and the fine Institute Building with new roads branching off to the shore, whilst on the other side the "array" fields have gone and are replaced with a colony of houses in Newton and Lee Roads, and grand shops facing the highway. Speaking of these fields reminds us that it would not be out of place to use them as a perfect illustration of "Form 4" served out some three years ago under the Finance Act 1909/10. At the same time we must point out that we take no sides in politics not being identified with one side or the other, but we think it might be useful to our readers to refer to the sale and purchase of the "Array fields", only a few years back and prior to the passing of the Finance Act. We think it will serve to show how the Chancellor of the Exchequer came to arrive at his decision to demand "Increment Duty". The "array fields" were the property of a non-resident owner to whom the rent received there from was not a large amount and the land not being of any importance for agriculture, decided to offer the same for sale, placing thereon only a small value. At the sale the whole of the land was sold for less than £800, measuring out to less than one penny per yard. The purchaser having no immediate use for his purchase, held it for about eight years and then sold for, we understand, £8000. Of course that was a piece of good luck, and no one attaches any blame to the owner for his unexpected good fortune. Now what caused that increased value? The owner himself did nothing whatever to bring this about he spent no money in development, in fact, it stood exactly the same as when he purchased. What then was the cause? Simply that the village of Hoylake was increasing in population, and the inhabitants required more dwellings, and this land being in the immediate vicinity, was the only land of any utility for the purpose of Workmen's dwellings, consequently the price of the land went up. Had this transaction taken place after the passing of the Finance Act, the Chancellor would have derived considerable revenue from the profit,

some 26 per cent, and rightly so, for although the purchase in the first instance was an investment or speculation, the owner could hardly object seeing that he had not spent any money, or made any special efforts to bring about so remarkable a rise in value. Cases of this description were numerous all over the country so Lloyd George decided these were the class of "hen roosts" he could properly rob.

Arriving at what is known as Chapel Road, we can point to a great change. Originally there was no road, merely open sand hills, with a few houses on one side, better situated and presenting a more prepossessing appearance than later years. Families lived here of highly respectable repute, for the dwellings were good, and the surroundings all that could be desired. Adjoining was Tom Washington's Dairy Farm, and just outside this farm was a well of water, known as "Tom Washington's Well". It would stand just about the centre of Chapel Road; this well had a fine spring of water, which in summer time supplied a goodly number of the immediate residents. It was built with walls of stone and had a roof of an old boat upside down, reminding one of the "wells" seen in the sandy deserts abroad.

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CONTRIBUTION No.10.

Near to the farm, Joseph Washington built a handsome little dwelling, delightfully situated, and most attractive with its gardens and trees, known as "Sycamore Cottage", but what a change now! The Dairy Farm has gone and the Builder has erected a terrace of tenements, whilst the District Council, in forming and making Chapel Road, placed the level so high as to put Sycamore Cottage down in a hole, resulting in a serious loss to the owner, who, unfortunately, made no complaint, but quietly slept on his rights until it was too late to rectify the damage; the house now presents a most forlorn appearance as compared with that of fifty years ago. Near here was the "big hill", the largest sand hill in Hoyle, and from its tops the finest sight could be had of the surrounding country and the sea. Frequently, the fishermen's wives could be seen with their knitting, for in those days, no fisherman's wife was seen outdoors without her needles and wool, busily preparing jerseys or stockings for the good man, using the big hill as a place of observance to watch if "our Bill" was going out to sea, or whether the "Pride of the Lake" and her crew were setting sail, for in those days the fishing boats anchored in and sailed from the Lake, to the fishing grounds, and not from Liverpool as is the practice now. On a moonlight night the sight from the Big Hill was splendid the country for miles around could be seen without any obstruction, Grange Hill, Frankby, Bidston Hill, etc.. The Big Hill has gone, removed by the hand of the builder, making room for changes.

At the foot of the Big Hill, and fronting what is now Hazel Road, was a small white cottage of one storey, standing well back on the rise of the hill, a very ancient structure, which like many others of its class has given way to a terrace of cottages; the inhabitants of this white cottage suffered a severe bereavement by the drowning of the father and his two sons; singular to say his name was John Randles, and was an uncle of John Randles recently lost in the Daisy disaster. Old Randles was returning, with others, from the Hoyle Bank in a small boat at flood tide, across the Lake, when a sudden squall came on, and overturned the small craft, leaving the occupants struggling in the water. Old Randles made a gallant effort for his life and those of his sons, for he got one onto his back and swam for land; unfortunately, on landing, he was so exhausted that he had not the strength to struggle to his feet, and both he and the son were drowned in the boiling surf; the other son also lost his life, with one other, only one man being saved. The accident was not seen by anyone until too late. Had the knowledge of life saving efforts been known as now, resuscitation would have restored life. We are still

suffering from these sad accidents, as many similar have happened since; more recently in the sad calamity of John Housley, his son and another.

Hazel Road's title is taken from the name of the first village blacksmith, John Hazlehurst, for his last smithy was on this road, but, here again, the building has disappeared. The first smithy, however, was in School Lane, and as business extended, a more commodious one was erected, the old smithy and shoeing house being converted into dwelling houses, still remaining, in one of which he lived and died. In the same locality Thomas Linekar carried on a prosperous business as a carpenter, boat builder, joiner and builder, and had in his yard the old-fashioned saw-pit, with the up and down saw, no longer visible except in remote country villages, the steam saw having superseded its use.

Before the construction of the main road to Birkenhead it was through the land, now Hazel Road, that Hoylake residents made their journeys to Seacombe and Birkenhead, for at one end was a stile which led over the sand-hills through Meolse, Leasowe Common, and on to the travelers' destination this being the only road or means of communication to town at that period.

Entering the village or the township of Hoose before referred to, on the main road we found a dwelling known as the Salt Box, with a fine specimen of a Mulberry Tree in its ground. Beyond the house and facing the road were four or five other smaller houses in a row of white, and only of one storey, so familiar to Hoylake in those days. These again, have given place to the Lighthouse Inn and shops. In one of these cottages dwelt Old Jimmy the Rag, a small, sturdy Irishman, who was a most familiar figure then, going the round of the district with a basket on his arm, containing buttons, needles, cotton reels, and other small wares, which he exchanged at the houses of call, for Old Rags and Bones and in the evening Old Jimmy would return with his sack filled full with odds and ends, heavy enough to bring the old man to his two double. He was well thought of by the residents and was respected. His great amusement was to visit some of the neighbours and have a hand at "all fours".

The tenant of the Salt Box was a rare old fossil, a fisherman named Silcock, better known as Swinney. He had a singular manner of distorting his features, a kind of hideous grin, with which he could frighten the children, frequently alarming grown-up strangers. At some sports held in the place he won the first prize of a copper kettle by grinning through a horse collar. Certainly he was one of the characters of the township.

The ownership of the Salt Box referred to gave rise to a certain litigation. It took its name on account of the resemblance to the housewife's box, which hangs on the wall stored with salt. The house had no apex roof, but a lean-to or "showering" one. The litigation came about through the heir-at-law of the adjoining property, on coming into his inheritance, generously sharing amongst his brothers and sister his newly acquired estate; he divided it into four parts running from the main road, including the cottages almost down to the railway, reserving at the rear of the houses right of road to each of his relatives and retaining the easterly portion for himself; at the time he was under the impression that the Salt Box belonged to him, as heir, but unfortunately this turned out to be incorrect. The site fronted the land he kept for himself and without this frontage his own plot of the estate was of little value. Under the belief which he honestly had, he took possession, only to find another claimant, and much to his sorrow, his own relatives assisted to dispossess him. A long trial at Chester Assizes, after many postponements, solved the ownership, and the poor heir-at-law was landed in for a heavy bill of costs, which led to disastrous results, in Chester Castle, under the Debtors' Act 1869. However, an Act of Parliament about this time was passed, through which he was once more restored to his friends. The trial was a most sensational one, and on the Assize day caused small gatherings to assemble in the village, awaiting the news of the proceedings, and the arrival home of the witnesses and parties.

Eventually, he purchased the site, and in later years transferred it to the School Trustees, who built the present Elementary Schools thereon.

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CONTRIBUTION No. 11.

Opposite to the Schools is the Chapel, built about the year 1863 by the Primitive Methodists, then a much smaller building. This body started a mission some few years previously, and held their meetings over a baker's shop, used as a storeroom; the entrance to it was by means of wooden steps on the outside. The shop was situate in Market Street, and is now in the occupation of Mr.H.Eccles. The service arrangements of the Methodists were similar to those in use by the Sa l vation Army now, with the exception of the customary instrumental music, and there is no doubt the Salvation Army out-door gatherings were adopted from the Primitive Methodists, as wherever the Primitive body took up work, outdoor speaking was the attraction.

When the Methodists first started, the inhabitants looked on with curiosity as they were not accustomed to having preaching, singing and prayers at the street corners, nor a procession of hymn singing along the streets. The Mission had as its leader a prominent Birkenhead tradesman, a tailor and draper in that town, who resided in the village of Moreton, where he carried on the business of a gentleman farmer. The Mission struggled on for a few years, but wasn't very successful, the people being most suspicious of the adherents and their system.

The "Congregationalists" subsequently took the building over; they, however, were more successful, enlarging the building to its present size, now the Wesleyan Mission.

Before the erection of the Chapel, there existed alongside of the situation two or three thatched houses, in Market Street, with gardens in front. One of these was a licensed house, and the customers usually sat openly in the garden consuming their beverage, the accommodation of the house being somewhat limited.

There were many licensed premises in Hoylake in those days, more than now, but the habits then were not those of today, the drinking was casual and. not systematic, or day by day and. hour by hour as at the present time.

When these "thatches" were sold, the purchaser pulled them down and built a terrace of cottages right on to the main road known as "Booth's Cottages." It is strange how builders would then insist on bringing the houses right on to the main road, within fifteen feet of the centre of the highway, leaving no gardens in front but plenty of land at the back, which now is of very little value, as it cannot be brought into usefulness, instead of setting well back, giving in the front more space for the widening of the main road. This is only one of other instances of houses similarly constructed in Market Street, which shows how valuable is the recent legislation viz., Town Planning Acts. Those in authority would have seen the necessity of preventing owners encroaching on the main road and providing better provision for the traffic which now exists.

Passing along we come to the small one-storey dwelling occupied by John Smith Lee, near Houghs' - father of John S.Lee opposite - which still remains, but looking as if it would like to bide itself in the presence of more imposing houses. Next to this we had. also three other small white washed cottages. Standing a little back from Lees' you could easily reach the top of the roof without climbing, and the

occupants of these were somewhat remarkable. In one dwelt "Uncle Pharoah", his wife "Aunt Nanny" and a large family with the surname of Silcock. As the residence consisted of only two compartments, and a small yard, what puzzled everybody was where did the inmates sleep, for the family consisted of the parents, four sons and three daughters, most of them being grown up.

Uncle Pharoah and his wife were both very tall and slender, so he took his sobriquet from Scripture, one of Pharoah's lean kine. Poor Uncle Pharoah once caused great sensation, specially amongst the children attending the schools in School Lane. Silcock had an illness which affected his brain, and escaping the notice of his family he suddenly appeared in school partially dressed, with a fisherman's shrimp net which he was vigorously pushing in front of him, along the surface of the road, under the impression he was shrimping in the Lake. Being tall and of powerful build, no one attempted to interfere until the welcome arrival of the Vicar, whose soothing influence on the invalid successfully returned him home.

The tenants of the others were an old sailor, known as "Dog of War" who was one of those arrivals in the village whom nobody seemed to know, or where he came from; he, however, made himself agreeable by telling yarns of his past roving habits. In the other resided "Robert Little" described usually as Old Bobby Little. Bobby lived as a widower, all alone in the corner house, and had a small coal-yard.

Although Old Bobby lived here, poor and humble, he had been in his day, a landed proprietor in the Township of Hoose, owning a very fair proportion of the place. The square of land running from his cottage up to School Lane, round Hazel Road, down Chapel Road, and on through Market Street, back to School Lane was his. This he sold from time to time to various purchasers, different lots at a trifling price, but which probably, at the time, was considered a good figure. He also owned the square of land fronting Market Street, from Elm Grove to, and including Mr. Leicester's (Crowthers) the butchers, and running back to the railway. Most of this was sold to Grisdales' and his son-in-law, John Blundell.

Robert Little, in his younger days, was a farmer, and had served in the Yeomanry - Lancashire Hussars - and judging from his build, must have been a very fine man; he used to say himself "I was a fine handsome young fellow then". The old man lived to a good old age, and in later years of life could be seen day by day, wondering along the seashore, nearly bent double, wearing an old top hat, picking up firewood along the tide mark; this he carried home on his back, tied up with rope. He was a great favourite with the young children, who were delighted to sit at eventime by his fire, with the room dimly lighted with a half-penny candle, eating a slice of Old bobby's loaf, and listening to his stories of by-gone days.

The unfortunate part of the dwelling was that it was nearly always filled with smoke, giving Robert's countenance out of doors, a not over cleanly appearance.

On the site of these cottages there are now three modern houses, providing another instance of building right on to the very edge of the roadway, for the purchaser of the land covered bit of land he could squeeze a brick upon, leaving no space for footpaths, and in School Lane scarcely room for a cart to pass along. (Council's property)

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CONTRIBUTION No.12.

In our last contribution we left off with the reference - old Robert Little and his residence at the corner of Market Street and. School Lane. The latter at this date was a real country lane with hedges on one side, and here we find another change in the method of building. First we have one who builds two houses without back doors, and scarcely any yard, but with a long stretch of land in the front which was of very little use for domestic purposes. Further along we find Cul-de-Sacs; for one owner purchases a fair quantity of land, build a one -storey house with the rear right on to his neighbour's property, no back door and no windows, reserving the remaining apparently for cultivation, but at the top end he has no means of ingress or egress. The adjoining owner builds two houses fronting School Lane with nice gardens, but very little back yard. Subsequently, both cases incidentally having acquired additional capital, no doubt by careful saving, each continues to build in the rear, and again houses with no back doors, no light and no entrance on the far side. In neither case has any thought been given for the future. Consequently, the property deteriorates in value and fails to claim the class of tenant as at first.

To gain an entrance from Church Road to School Lane, it was necessary to go through the Church yard as there was no footpath or back passage to Ferndale Road as now. All the School children and their elders from the Newtown or Church Road(now Trinity Road) side of Hoylake had to pass through the graveyard - a most trying ordeal and at night time it required considerable nerve on the part of all to venture the journey. Failing this, there was only one way and that was to go round by Church Road, Market Street or the Village, as it was then known, and on to School Lane.

However, some time after 1860, Mr. John Prescott, the owner of the Dale Estate, who happened to be the brother-in-law of Mr. Sheldon, the then Vicar, generously gave a slice of land running parallel with the church yard, and formed a four-foot passage, which was a great boon to school children and to the inhabitants generally. The passage or footpath was cindered so it was called "The Black Lane" (now the back passage of Ferndale Road). It was opened with great ceremony. All the children formed up out of school and marched in procession through the lane, receiving a bun and fruit at the Church Road side. At each end posts were erected to prevent vehicular traffic. Nevertheless it did not stop straying donkeys from wandering through and many has been the fright on dark nights through pedestrians suddenly coming up against a pair of piercing eyes and long ears of the ass, or else probably falling over the animal, which had laid down, quietly sleeping, and rousing up with that awful roar, peculiar to the donkey breed as if resenting the disturbance of his peaceful slumber, whilst poor the passenger came to the conclusion his end had arrived, for it must be remembered these were days of darkness, no lights of any description, gas being an unknown guide.

The Schools in School Lane now are about four times the size as at the period we write, and they were sufficiently large to accommodate all classes, infants, boys and girls, from Hoylake and Meolse.

We may here contrast the style of dress of the scholars then with that of today. No lad was supposed to be breeched until he was six, and then not in Knickerbockers, they were strangers; but he was fitted out in long corduroy trousers and a blouse or pinafore, with a leather belt and a Scotch cap. Such was the clothing of all lads until they got to about fourteen and. ready for work, when he donned a jacket. Girls wore pinafores, with the farmhouse linen bonnet. Both lads and girls looked quite picturesque, and one wonders how the present generation would take to this character if we were to suggest a revival of custom.

The schoolmaster was Mr. Stephen Stanley, and a fine specimen of a teacher he was - strict, and with much dignity, such as was required in those days, the schoolmaster being looked upon with considerable respect, for he was the learned man of the village. His wife was the schoolmistress, and she still survives, hale and hearty, and must be now over eighty years of age. Mr. Stanley was

succeeded by Mr. William Holmes, of quite another stamp, yet an excellent master. He conceived the idea of a bell, on top of a high post of wood, to ring calling the scholars to study at the correct hours, clocks being few, and none reliable. This bell proved a source of considerable trouble, for one dark night, the bell commenced to ring, apparently of its own accord. Poor William Holmes looked on affrighted and aghast, for no human hand was visible, still the tongue kept on clapping the side of the bell. The mystery was not discovered for some time, when it turned out that some of his pupils had climbed on to the roof, attached a reel of cotton to the tongue, and at a distance, in a secure hiding, they were quietly tugging away at the end of the cotton reel, until the ridging tile cut the cotton, and so ended their mischievous work.

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CONTRIBUTION No .13.

Leaving School Lane we enter Market Street to find another change in the building line. Croxton's Houses and Richard Bird's is a complete reversal. Built in the centre of a good square of land, each left a considerable quantity of land in the front and likewise at the back. To make use the lane today, and to be put to its legitimate use it would be necessary to pull down the existing dwellings, and make avenues of houses. Bird's Yard has now been demolished, a Cinema being erected on the Front, whilst no doubt, the land. At the back will be put to some useful purpose. The Cinema will prove a big attraction and ornament to the main street.

On the opposite side we have the "Anchor Inn" which, however, is not so ancient as the "Punch Bowl". The proprietor also carried on in the adjoining building the business of a butcher. Next to the butchers shop there existed a beer house, one to which reference was made in a previous article. This beer house stood in a position occupied by the two buildings erected by the late Mr. Joseph Iles. With the small number of inhabitants in those days, one wonders where the customers came from. There was then, however, no difficulty in obtaining a license as there is at this time, for all that was necessary was for two resident ratepayers to sign a requisition to the Excise, and then followed the license. The duty was small, hence it was open to anyone to enter into this class of business without fear of much loss. There were no policemen, only the parson who was usually called upon to quell disturbance, should occasion arise. This he easily managed for, on the herald of his approach the combatants scattered, if not they felt the effect of his stout walking stick for a few days to come. Next to Ile's shop there now resides one of Hoylake's natives - the oldest woman in the place. We should think she must now be approaching her century.

In Market Street, and nearly opposite to the Anchor Inn, we had the General Post Office, under the control of Mr. John Hughes, and carried on in the premises now occupied by Mr. Dodson, Baker, The business was not so extensive as compared with that of today, but even then, on account of the small mess of the building, it was frequently cramped by customers. Mr. Hughes lost his life in a sad accident, for in attempting to stop a run-away horse, he was knocked down and received injuries causing his death, leaving a widow and a large family. He was a man much respected, and large was the sympathy which went out to his widow and children. Mrs. Hughes, however, carried on as postmistress for many years, and on her retirement left with all the good wishes she had deservedly earned. We had then no telegraph, and any such messages had to be brought all the way from Birkenhead by messengers on foot. Bicycles had not been dreamt of. On departure of Mrs. Hughes, the post office was transferred to the shop now in the occupation of Mr. Cowin, and it was here, about 1872, the telegraph service was inaugurated. The mails then were conveyed in a specially built carriage, a sort of box with a lid on the top, and the mails dropped inside. The top provided one seat,

surrounded with an iron rail, just and only just sufficiently large to hold the driver. In the summer time he had a pleasant duty, but in the winter, the journey at times was a miserable one, and in the snowy season it was not infrequent for the mail to be snowed up for in these days we had storms which rendered the roads almost impassable, and the mail-cart and driver had to be searched for, and sometimes dug out of a drift. The poor old driver with about half-a-dozen top coats on and numerous rugs, he looked a veritable Father Xmas when covered with snow. Occasionally he had to be lifted from his perch and gradually thawed from his frozen and benumbed condition. Yet we got our letters and newspapers with one service a day, and were happy and contented, without the hustle and grumbling of the present day.

Next to Hughes' Post Office, stood a fisherman's white cottage, below the level of the road, in the occupation, and owned by old Richard Hughes; he kept a nice plot of land in front full of plants blooming in their season, and in the centre stood the figurehead of a woman, which had evidently come from the bow of some wrecked vessel; its pedestal was formed of sea shells, and with its flowery surroundings gave the cottage a pleasing and delightful aspect. Old Richard with his wife "Nanny" were possessors of a famous donkey, named "Billy". He was famous on account of his speed, for at the annual sports held on the racecourse, no donkey could compete with Nanny Hughes' Billy. He outpaced all the others, and secured many prizes. What lad in those days did not know Nanny Hughes' "Billy"; he was the pet of all. His jockey was the owner's grandson, Tommy Dodd, now the well-known coxswain of the lifeboat, and in these days he steers his boat successfully on many errands of mercy to shipwrecked mariners, so he steered old Billy first past the winning post. The house was sold, pulled down, and replaced by shops, facing the main road, and houses in Church Road.

Further along we had the "Punch Bowl", the oldest public house in the village, kept and owned by Robert Shaw; it was not the Punch Bowl of today, for it then consisted of a small thatched building, with little accommodation, whilst the front, facing Market Street, were stables which have been converted into its present and more suitable business condition. In these days this was the only place in the village where a newspaper could be seen and read, for it must be remembered newspapers were expensive articles, each one having to bear a sixpenny stamp. When the paper arrived, the villagers were in the habit of assembling under the thatch to read or to hear read the news of the world beyond Hoylake, and when war was going on, we can imagine with what eagerness the audience listened to reports of battles and victories won; or may be, there was, as now, some sensational matter reported which Interested the villagers. Occasionally old Robert Shaw would lend out the newspapers, but the borrower had to be someone of repute or perhaps a favoured customer. What a change today, residents are not satisfied with morning papers of which there are plenty, but must have several editions of evening news, whilst we have our weekly FREE PRESS with ALL the local events of the week.

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CONTRIBUTION No.14.

In the rear of the Punch Bowl was a large field, cultivated by the tenant, but the fruits of the earth are gone and the land is occupied with Streets. "Shaw Street", named after the owner, "Dawson", "Walker" and "Rudd" Streets likewise family names.

Before we leave Market Street, we should like to draw attention to our first article, wherein we spoke of Turnpike Road. Prior to 1850 there was no road to Birkenhead, as it exists now. Sand hills and land under cultivation stood in the place of the present highway. In 1841, certain influential gentlemen secured an Act of Parliament, to make a road, beginning at the gate or entrance of the stables of the

Woodside Hotel, and running thence through Birkenhead, Bidston, Moreton, Great Meolse, Hoose, and up to a cottage tenanted by Henry Berry, in Little Meolse. This house would be the one now occupied by Dr. Williams near to Mr. Lowndes' at the entrance of Meols Drive, but which has been considerably enlarged by Dr. Williams. Mrs. Berry kept what was known as a "Dame's" school, and here, the younger generation, who were unable to travel to West Kirby School, now the Calday Grange Grammar School, of course then only the ordinary village school, received their elementary education, as Hoylake then possessed no National Schools.

It appeared that representation had been made to Parliament that there was a sort of road which needed improvement, and which would be of great advantage to the inhabitants of the several villages if the road were made, maintained and repaired. Certain trustees were appointed to carry out the work, and so came about the turnpike road, which was to exist for thirty years for the construction of which the Trustees were empowered to collect a toll of so much per head for cattle, and so much for vehicles. These tolls were periodically sold to the highest bidder, who ran the risk of a profit or a loss on the price he paid for the undertaking.

Proceeding from the Punch Bowl along Market Street, towards the west, the road was bounded with the usual country hedge, and a slight ditch by its side, whereas now we find a line of well stocked shops, all, apparently engaged in successful business. Opposite to the Ship Inn we had a fisherman's thatched cottage, occupied and owned by Joseph Barlow, with a large field or tract of land at the back which he had inherited from his father, who had resided there when Hoylake was represented by a few, and only a few similar, scattered houses. Joseph Barlow's widow survived him many years, and prior to her death, the cottage and land were disposed of by auction, and it was remarkable the lowness of the price the land fetched, realizing a small figure in most lots of one shilling per yard. What bargain for any far-seeing speculator. The reduced figure may be accounted for from the fact that, at the moment, there was plenty of leasehold land which required no purchase money, hence freehold land such as Barlow's was at a discount. The position today is covered with artisan dwellings represented by Rudd Street, Walker Street, and Wood Street. As regards the latter, a great injustice was done to the Barlow family by the Local Board, for on the estate being laid out, the family intended to perpetuate the name, and designated the Street Barlow Street; however, the proprietor of the parcel Delivery Company having secured the corner plot built a shop and stables, now in the occupation of the Co-operative Society, made this a branch, and placed on the side of the property "Wood Street" to coincide with his depot in Liverpool. The Local Board confirmed his selection, although the deeds of the property abutting on the street proclaim it as Barlow Street, a name full of explanation, whereas in future generations, Wood Street convey the idea that here a forest must have existed; so misleading, as scarcely a tree or wood of any description grew on the site.

Still advancing we come to the corner shop at Lake Place recently known as Gibson's Stores. This was the original Tithe barn, wherein the Rector of West Kirby garnered his tithes received from the farmers of the ancient parish, for Hoylake at this period was included in his jurisdiction.

On the opposite side we have another instance of misguided building; the owner of the land built two very fine houses right up to, if not beyond, the line of his property; certainly within fifteen feet of the centre of the highway, whilst at the rear he left any amount of land, of very little value to the dwellings, and less value today for building purposes; so he caused a bottle neck street, which is now, and will always be, a great hindrance to traffic on the main thoroughfare.

On the main thoroughfare "The Tithe barn", afterwards with the house adjoining, became private residences, having small gardens in front, and it is easy to see the narrowness of the street when you

observe that what was the garden is now a footpath. Retracing back towards the east end passing the "Ship", we come to Mr. Leicester's the butcher; (see No.24) this shop stands on the site of what was another licensed house, only for out-door consumption. So that, as previously observed in these "Changes", this class of business was fairly well predominant. Further along we had another thatched house, the land occupied now by fine shops. This thatched house was considered a mansion in its day, for the accommodation was fairly good, and it had a bedroom in the roof, the window of which could be easily reached by the hand of the passer by. A portion of this thatch was occupied by a butcher, and from this small beginning the foundation of a future prosperous business was laid by the proprietor when he, after one small change built the fine shop in the occupation of Mr. Percy Harrop. At one time this thatch was tenanted by "Old Doctor Billy Smith". A decent old chap was the doctor, full of intelligence. He acquired his title through having been once in the service of a medical man. He certainly possessed some knowledge of medicine, and also some other mysterious acquisition. He was often consulted by the natives. One of his qualifications was he could charm away the "warts" or growths on anyone's hands; and he also had some other mysterious power in many cases of disease. He was a staunch teetotaller, and was always advocating the principles of total abstinence. Full of reminiscences, great was the delight for numbers of fishermen to while away the winter evenings with Doctor Billy in his thatch, listening to his tales of days gone by. He lived to a venerable old age. Still retracing we come to the first chemist's shop, now occupied by William Cowan; this was opened and carried on by a druggist named Walker, but when the gold fever in Australia and New Zealand came on he emigrated for pastures new, taking with him one of the younger sons, William of John Hazlehurst, the blacksmith. Nothing much was heard of the Walker family afterwards, but William Hazlehurst became a prosperous man In New Zealand; he came only once to visit the home of his parents and again returned to his wife and family, his possessions still increasing, His demise took place not many years ago.

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CONTRIBUTION No.15.

Next to the Druggist's shop with the present entrance to what is now known as Elm Grove, we find Shaw's Yard, or what was more familiarly named "Cockle Alley". This Yard with its houses still remains, and has undergone very slight change. It is about the most ancient in Hoylake, and was owned at the time by Robert Shaw, previously mentioned. The corner house, n Market Street was the first draper's shop in the place, and was conducted by one, Martin Johnson, a typical Irishman, together with his good wife "Bella". Martin originally was a travelling packman, visiting the district from time to time, until he ceased his village callings and settled in this shop. Here could be purchased the usual drapery goods, on a small scale for the shop was not large and did not admit of a big stock, still, it was sufficient to supply the wants of the then fishermen population. Martin also combined with his business that of a newsagent, and great was the demand for the WEEKLY MERCURY, issued at a price, the stamp tax having been withdrawn. Its columns of "Multum in Parva" were much in demand. Martin and his wife lived until far on in years, and on their demise the Newspaper Agency was taken up by John Shaw, then a youth, but now one of our most interesting and successful carriage proprietors. John was keen in his new venture and walked to Birkenhead and back to secure his newspapers, so reducing his working expenses and making his profits as large as possible. However, his roving disposition led him to sea, a life he followed with many adventures in foreign lands for some years. In the yard was a good old worthy, John Jones, better known as "Bone Jack", so called on account of his restless, toiling habits. John was one of the most hard working men of his day; thin and wiry, his energy for work seemed to have no ending, and it used to be said "that he worked the flesh off his bones". He had several plots of land which he farmed, assisted by a well-known "mule" instead of a

horse. This animal was very vicious, but in his owner's presence was a well-conducted quadruped. At this date, John was the village night soil man, and he was in great demand for his work; every householder had to pay him for the removal of the refuse, and had to be very civil and probably entertain him. In addition to "light" refreshments, otherwise the removal might await his pleasure, whereas today, the town provides quite a small army of men for this work.

John's family, in addition, followed the traditional employment of cockle gatherers, and most of the neighbours in the yard pursued the same vocation; the women themselves went barefooted with their donkeys, in all sorts of weather, winter and summer, to the cockle bank, and with their striped Lindsay petticoats fastened at the knee, presented the appearance of wearing knickerbockers or divided skirts. On returning with their spoil to the yard, there was a good deal of washing of the cockles in preparation for Market. On so many days a week lads and girls journeyed to the town of Birkenhead, hawking cockles from street to street; so we find the designation of Cockle Alley.

There was no School-board Officer then, and we are afraid education was lost to the families of the cocklers.

In the same yard, next to the Draper's shop, resided "Old Peter Sherlock" a fisherman, market gardener, general carrier, and coal dealer rolled into one. Peter had a large family with a massive wife and it troubled most of the residents to know how so many of a family found sleeping accommodation in so small a dwelling; however, healthy, outdoor life led to a sturdy set of men and women when the family grew up; daughters took after their mother, Jane was quite a giantess with a pair of muscular, bare arms which put to shame any of the male sex; sacks of coal were lifted and slung into carts or on to donkey backs as if they were bags of feathers instead of a hundred-weight of coal.

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CONTRIBUTION No.16

Leaving Market Street we will proceed seawards, and pass along Church Road. Originally, this was not of the length as now. The road ended at the White House, corner of Grove Road, instead of continuing on to the shore by Sea View. The only way to the Beach was by turning to the left, into Grove Road, to a small cottage known as "Molly Copple's House", opposite to the Grove entrance, then as now, along Grove Place (formerly Back Sea View) into Government Road to the Coastguards'.

In 1812 Mr, John Timothy Swainson secured several acres of sand hills and land from one, Charles Monk, forming the land fronting the seashore from the Coastguards' to the site of the Higher Elementary Schools, and running backwards or south along Government Road, Grove Place, into Church Road, and on to the east taking in the site of the Church, Vicarage, and ending at the Schools on the Promenade. Mr. Swainson afterwards occupied the "Dale" as a family residence, and subsequently gave land for a continuation of Church Road through his property on to the shore, terminating at Mr. Hesselgraves' and Mr. King's school, This led to the development of the land purchased and a good deal of building took place, which became known as the "Newtown", of which, more anon

In 1824 Mr. Swainson died, leaving Betty Swainson, his widow. This good lady, in 1833, gave the land for the Church, Vicarage and Schools, to the then Lord Bishop, and certain other clergymen as trustees. (See Contribution No.22). The Church was built and endowed by her, the designer being the celebrated architect Picton, of Liverpool, and the builders Messrs. Walker, of Birkenhead. The same

Picton's memory is perpetuated in the City of Liverpool, by the Picton Hall in Brownlow Hill, as a tribute to his many services to the then town of Liverpool. At the erection of the Church, the entrance was on the north side, known as the Western door, but this being to be found inconvenient was closed and still remains unused, whilst the present entrance and porch has been substituted.

In the year 1868 an enlarged addition was made by a new chancel and a vestry. The Minister's house at first was much smaller than now, for it only consisted of the portion facing Church Road, the wing on the North side was added by one of the incumbents, the Rev. R. V. Sheldon. At this date, the residence was known as the Parsonage, the minister only holding the title of Incumbent. The first vicar was the Rev. R. V, Sheldon. From the beginning the parish has had prior to the Venerable Archdeacon Paige-Cox, eight parsons. The first was the Rev. J. H. Swainson, son of the patron, who held the living from 1834 - 36, succeeded by Rev. Thomas France 1836 - 39; Rev. J. G. Longueville, 1840 - 1854; Rev. Phillip Haines, 1854 - 58; Rev. R.V, Sheldon, 1858 - 70; Rev. John Yolland, 1870 - 1889; Rev. W. S. P. Skelding, 1889 - 91; and. the Rev. Francis Sanders, 1891 - 1912.

The Church was built as a great accommodation to the many visitors who resorted here in the summer season, and for the inhabitants at large, chiefly fishermen, in fact according to a small pamphlet which was issued by way of appeal for support, amongst merchants of Liverpool, the Church was intended almost for the benefit of the fishermen, for so it therein stated. The present generation appear to have been crowded out and now worship in the Bethel, a small building at the bottom of Church Road, where services on Sunday evenings are regularly held, with, we believe, a good attendance of the fishermen and their families.

By an error on the part of the clergy, marriages were solemnized before the sacred edifice was authorized for the Ceremony, and great was the consternation of the contracting parties when the discovery was made. However, similar mistakes have been made in other parts of England, and a Special Act of Parliament was passed in the House of Commons and Lords which confirmed the weddings and legalized the marriage.

Very little can be recorded about Mr. Swainson, but the memory of Mr. Longueville is still green with the older inhabitants of the village. He was a real Parish priest in its true sense, beloved and revered by his flock, and held great command and influence over them. He left to become the Vicar of Eccleston, a village on the estate of the Marquis (now Duke) of Westminster, near Chester. His visits to his old parish were frequent, and. the Church was always packed on these occasions. His wife was quite an idol amongst the women, such was the Christian spirit she possessed, almost, if not as much, as her husband. It was not an uncommon event for Mr. Longueville during his pastorate to walk in unannounced into the fisherman's cottage at meal time and sit himself down join in the humble family meal. There was always room and a chair for the parson. His flock was not large so he knew all by name, and was therefore well acquainted with any absentees from Sunday worship. His control of the youths and young men was supreme, for he kept them with a strict hand, and any escapades on their part usually brought into use his companion the walking stick. On his death a number of old inhabitants journeyed to the funeral. His widow survived him many years and she kept up her acquaintance with the parishioners until her death which only took place in recent years.

The Rev. Phillip Haines followed, but his stay was short and he went into Lancashire. He was a strong protestant of the Evangelical type, and in after years was strong in controversy in the press and debate on public platforms on Romanism.

CONTRIBUTION No. 17.

Mr. Haines was followed by another evangelical in the Rev. R. Sheldon, and his work in the parish was on similar lines to that of Rev. Mr. Longueville. During his pastorate he won the affection and confidence of his parishioners, and was greatly beloved by all. His interest in the sick was a speciality. Their sufferings were alleviated with delicacies and their wants supplied from the family kitchen. Like Mr. Longueville, he knew every man, woman and child in the village, and his visitations amongst them were frequent and at all times heartily welcomed. Being tall of stature, in walking he was possessed of a long stride which enabled him to cover the ground from one end of the parish to another with rapidity and ease. He took special care in the education of his younger flock in the schools, both Sunday and day, and scarcely a day was missed without a look in by the parson. So well known was he that every boy "touched his cap" with a salute of the hand, whilst the girls "dropped a curtesy" when meeting him in the street. Some newcomers resented these attitudes of respect as favouring of feudalism, but such was not the feeling of the parishioners. The services in the church were of the congregational character - hearty singing, both of hymns, psalms and canticles. The organ was small, and the organist a lady, Mrs. Kirk, elderly and of the Victorian age, with graceful curls on each side of the temples of the head. Her playing of the organ was helpful, but at times she fell into the piano style, which did not enhance her musical talents.

The choir was a mixed one, ladies and gentlemen, and without the tuition of a musician did not aspire to great things in music, but on special occasions an anthem would be brought forth and it was considered a miracle if the choir held together and went through to the end without a breakdown. To change from one chant to another in the "Te Deum" was considered a mighty feat, although the members showed signs of perspiration, evidence of extreme nervousness.

At this date fishermen were the most regular attenders at church. They formed the habit of all congregating in a body just outside the church porch, and on the last stroke of the bell marched with a mighty rush into their seats, which were always vacant for them underneath the gallery, and at the conclusion of the service all departed again in a body. The entrance of the fishermen to the Church alarmed new residents for their advent resembled that of a regiment of soldiers.

The pulpit of the Church was a two-decker. One below for the reading of prayers, and the top one for the sermon. The parson from the top pulpit could survey his flock with eagle eye and with his knowledge and memory he had no difficulty in reminding any absent fishermen that he was missing on the Sunday.

Apropos of the fishermen, we may here refer to the custom on their marriage at the church. Every man of this vocation wore a brand new top hat, and we think most of them thought they had not been properly wedded if they were not provided with this now nearly defunct headgear. These "tiles" were usually put away for future ceremonies, principally funerals, and as the years rolled on the various styles of fashions of the top hat was extremely grotesque if not amusing, high, low, broad and narrow the shapes, ancient and modern. We can call to mind one ancient salt, not long departed this life, in old Peter Jones, widely known as "Peter Careful". Peter wore his top hat until the day of his death, nearly ninety years, and most people were under the impression that Peter must have slept in his "Topper" so regularly and in all weathers was he seen in his "top shiner".

Up to the date of enlarging of the Chancel, Mr. Sheldon always preached in the Evangelical black gown and white linen stock, wearing the white surplice until the hymn before the sermon, then he

entered his vestry and emerged with the black gown to address his congregation, but on the completion of the chancel addition he adopted what had become a general practice, the white surplice throughout the whole service. Some of the parishioners were inclined to fear this was a tendency to Rome, but knowing their minister's strong Protestantism so well their fears soon melted away. In these days the pews were the old fashioned boxes with doors, straight backs and very little comfort. The new seatings were made by Councillor Aldred, then a young man just out of apprenticeship, and we think this would be his first serious contract. Their condition today speaks highly for the workmanship and reflects great credit on his undertaking.

In all matters of the welfare of the parish, Mr. Sheldon took a leading and active part, his advice at all times being in demand by rich and poor.

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CONTRIBUTION No.18.

Soon after his arrival, or about the time, the Oddfellows' Club, a Friendly Society was started, a branch of the Independent Order of Oddfellows, and in this he took great interest; once a year the members held anniversary, and attended worship at the Church. It was usual for the members to assemble at headquarters, the "Ship Inn", and then for two of the principal officers to proceed to the parsonage and return with Mr.Sheldon, wearing his black gown and white stock. The minister took his place at the head of the procession, accompanied on either side by the two officers and immediately in the rear was a large silk banner, beautifully painted, and carried by two members, followed by a Brass Band with a large number of members in regalia of blue sashes, and so wended their way to the Church. With the commanding figure of the minister in his robes leading and the general inhabitants following, the whole formed an imposing procession.

The Vicar was great on Penny Readings, and these were held in the schools fortnightly. Of course, the "Choir" had to sing a glee, and the ladies and gentlemen of the district, sometimes assisted by the visitors, usually provided the programme. The whole village turned out to these entertainments, old and young, and what glorious seating accommodation. Fancy the old man and his wife sitting on infants' forms, about nine inches high, with their knees under their chins, whilst at one end of the room chairs might be had for the large sum of sixpence.

The platform consisted of a number of fish boxes covered over with green baize cloth, whilst the lighting of the room came from oil lamps, fastened on to the wall. With pianoforte solos by ladies of tender age, humorous readings by "Draper Jones" (the late Mr. William Jones, first Chairman of the Local Board), who was always a great favourite at these "Readings", for he was quite an adept in this branch, whilst a comic song was the rage of the evening, and encores could not be denied. The attendance was a full house, and although the whole proceedings were primitive, they were a source of much enjoyment and many pleasant evenings were spent in this manner in the dark and dreary winter time. The next performance was eagerly looked forward to.

Mrs. Sheldon was a great favourite, and was always at her husband's right hand. Her great delight was to encourage sewing amongst the girls, and on occasion, awarded prizes, the first usually being a "work-box". This was eagerly sought after, and keen was the competition. She also conducted on Sundays a bible class amongst the senior girls, and generally she was to the front in parochial work. Their family consisted of two daughters. Mr. Sheldon's departure was full of regret, when he removed to Ormskirk, as Rector, where he subsequently became Canon Sheldon,

On the death of Mrs. Sheldon, a large number of his old parishioners journeyed all the way to Ormskirk to attend the funeral, such was the veneration they had. It was customary for the undertaker to supply all mourners with black gloves, and on this occasion he had a good supply, so far as numbers went, but not in the sizes, and although we do not like to be humorous at this solemn event, yet it was exciting to see the gallant efforts of the men trying to put on a kid gloves, and. when a big, brawny fist tried to get inside a pair of gloves two or three sizes too small, it certainly caused much amusement; however the gloves fitted two or three fingers, and so everyone was satisfied.

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CONTRIBUTION No.19.

On the preferment of the Rev. R. V. Sheldon to Ormskirk in 1870, a curate from St. Hilary's Church, Wallasey, the Rev. John Yolland, M.A. was presented to the living, and. unlike his predecessor he was faced in the future with many trials and Ecclesiastical difficulties, most of which he successfully surmounted. At this date, Hoylake was in a chrysalis state, just emerging from the rustic to the urban, or a rapidly rising residential district. The railway had popularised the place, extensive building operations had commenced which led to new residents settling here, the natives with their children had increased, and in addition more working men came and remained, so that the schools were too small and had to be extended; again and again this operation had to be repeated until a School Board appeared to be inevitable. However, the Rev. John kept plodding along and with the valuable assistance of the late Dr. Otho Shaw, Mr. Arthur Wrigley, Mr. George Watkins, and others, the Meolse Schools were built and so relieved the pressure on the Mother Schools. Oh, those Meolse Schools! To those of us remember the various appeals, and the concerts and bazaars - they would never cease. The Meolse Schools overshadowed almost everything else in the parish for the time being.

At this period the Non-Conformists, led by the late Mr. Evan Evans, one of the pioneer builders of Hoylake, initiated a mission of Calvinistic Methodism. Commencing in Lake Place Mr. Evans erected the skeleton of three houses between Evans Road and Market Street, that is to say the outer walls with the requisite windows for cottages were there, but not the inner walls, and here began what was a successful mission was not long before it was necessary to remove to a new chapel built in Alderley Road, where it has permanently settled with the exception that the very pretty chapel became too small, and it has been swallowed up by the present larger building. A good many natives, no doubt attracted by the new form of worship, and the energy of the congregation, left the church of their fathers, and joined the new congregation, much to the discomfort of the Vicar. The Congregationalists, headed by a Mr. Peck and a Mr. Gould, seeing the success of the Calvinists immediately followed suit, secured the Primitive Methodist Chapel at the end of the village and for a time a most prosperous congregation was raised. Good Templar Lodges, Bands of Hope, and the kindred societies were formed, the Congregational Mission was even more successful, doubly so, than their brethren in Lake Place. Even this building got too small and had to be extended, eventually leading to a removal to a new place of worship in Station Road. Unfortunately the change proved disastrous, almost fatal, for the adherents fell away nearly to zero and it was a question whether the mission would not have to be abandoned and the building sold. However, wiser counsels prevailed, and the Rev. J. C. Neil, M.A., B.D., was induced to take up the work; very soon he galvanised the mission into a flourishing position, and the Congregationalists have much to be proud of in their pastor, for instead of a collapse, another larger and more substantial church has been erected.

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CONTRIBUTION No.20.

In the meantime, the Vicar, the Rev. John Yolland, had not lost sight of the responsibilities attached to his parish; the children still kept on increasing and the school accommodation decreasing, so he brought about a voluntary rate in the three townships of Hoose, Great and Little Meolse, and by this assistance he made further extensions to the school; in the meanwhile he got together a committee, whose work it was to secure land for new schools, a school board this time having been definitely decided upon. Eventually the difficulty was overcome, a site for new schools was purchased, but the vicar did not live to see the work matured. As in the case of the schools, so the church was getting too small for his parishioners and he started worship with the aid of laymen in the schools every Sunday evening; the residents flocked to these services, appreciating the efforts of the vicar and his assistants. On one occasion a rather amusing incident occurred. A young student, a son of a Birkenhead clergyman, and now a most prominent minister himself, walked out from Birkenhead to conduct the service; he arrived at the schools to find the clock fingers pointed out it was time to commence; having no watch himself to guide him, and thinking he had taken more time to walk out than he expected, he began the service without the organist and with only two of a congregation; as he progressed worshippers kept arriving, likewise the organist, who was at a loss to find the service so far advanced, whilst the people were in a quandary, and it was not until the end that the puzzle was solved when it was discovered the school clock was nearly half an hour fast. Nevertheless, the congregation heard an excellent sermon, for the young man was an eloquent preacher, although they missed a good portion of the service.

During Mr. Yolland's pastorate, he was the means of raising a fund which built the present organ, a great acquisition to the church; and he further introduced a surpliced choir of boys, superseding the mixed choir of ladies and gentlemen. The choir of boys and men, under the able tuition of the present organist Mr. Farnall (who had recently been appointed organist and schoolmaster), arrived at a fine state of perfection, for it was considered the best choir in Wirral; indeed, many think that no choir has ever approached the same high standard as the first.

As in the case of the schools, so the vicar had now to turn his attention to the church. The work of the parish had overgrown the vicar, and the parishioners provided for him a curate, the first curate of the church. It was also becoming evident that the accommodation was becoming too small, and another church was required, especially at the west end, or "up the green", so he set to work to secure a site. The late Lord Stanley was approached, and he responded by offering land situated where the present R.L. Golf Club now stands; this was too much for the golfers, whose headquarters were the Royal Hotel, as it would deprive them of one of their sporting holes, then the 3rd. hole; and after some pressure, Lord Stanley withdrew the offer, and selected a site on the opposite side road, viz., Wharton's Farm; this the vicar and his committee accepted, and went to some expense with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in the matter. Unfortunately, for some reason which was never disclosed, Lord Stanley withdrew his offer altogether, and also his annual support to the schools, so ended for the time any further proceedings in this respect. Poor Mr. Yolland was so disheartened that he yielded up a portion of his parish to West Kirby, and a boundary stone was placed on the land, where Mr. Eastwood's house is built, in Meols Drive, denoting, that beyond, in the west, was the Parish of West Kirby; and so St. Andrew's Church came into existence. At the time the vicar's action caused some irritation and displeasure, for at this period there was keen rivalry as well as jealousy between Hoylake and West Kirby. A few of the excitable parishioners were so enraged that a plot was formed for a midnight raid to remove the obnoxious boundary stone, with its mystical letters sculptured thereon; a barrow was provided, together with implements of mischief, but unfortunately, (or perhaps fortunately), the whole

affair sprung a leak, a Jonah was in the family, and the scheme had to be abandoned, much to the regret of the would be marauders.

It will thus be seen that Mr. Yolland had a great deal of work to perform, and although he was not physically a strong man he did an immense amount of work, under trying and difficult circumstances; like his predecessor he was ably supported by his wife, Mrs. Ernma Yolland, and when he died in 1889 after 19 years' ministry, the parish lost a faithful pastor, respected and revered by all, Church and Nonconformists alike, for he was on the best of terms with the ministers of all denominations.

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CONTRIBUTION No.21,

The Rev. W.S.P. Skelding, M.A., a curate from Bowden, Cheshire, followed Mr. Yolland, and although his stay was not of long duration he endeared himself to his parishioners, particularly the fishermen. A young man, with plenty of energy, he was just the man at this period the parish required, and much regret was felt when he resigned the living and entered the legal profession as a Barrister-at-Law. In the short time he was with us, he followed up his predecessor's work, and the new Schools in Market Street were built mainly through his exertions, as a considerable amount of money was raised by him towards the buildings. Mr. Skelding abolished the pew rent system, and also gave up the remainder of the land attached to the Vicarage for the enlargement of the burial ground in the Churchyard, so pushing off as far as Hoylake was concerned for a long time, the necessity of a cemetery.

Mr. Skelding was succeeded by the Rev. Francis Sanders, M.A., Curate of Eastham. His demise being of so recent a date, his memory and good work will still be fresh in the minds of our readers, so that it is unnecessary for us to make any enlarged reference. It may not however be known that the living was offered to Mr. Sanders, and refused by him prior to Skelding. It is interesting to record that Mr. Sanders held the living longer than any other clergyman, and during his time the churches of St. Hildeburgh and St. John's, Great Meolse, were built, whilst the old schools in School Lane were enlarged, extended and made useful for the increased number of infant children, thus providing more accommodation for the senior children in the new schools. During his pastorate, Canon Blencowe, of West Kirby, generously gave up to Mr. Sanders the whole of the "Tithes" payable by the Hoylake Parish. Mr. Sanders was an attractive preacher and found time during his many duties to devote a little of his spare time to literary work, chiefly historical in local matters of Wirral.

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CONTRIBUTION No.22.

Before leaving the Church we desire to make a slight correction in one of our previous articles, in which we stated that Mrs. Swainson had built and endowed the Church. This is not quite accurate in this respect, and we are much indebted to one of our readers for generously permitting us inspection of a very old newspaper, i.e., THE LJVERPOOL COURIER, bearing the date, Wednesday, April 11, 1832. This paper, we understand was found in the chimney of a dwelling house in course of demolition at Maghull, Lancs., in which a special paragraph draws attention to:-

The laying of the first stone of the Free Church at Hoylake on Monday Last, and that there is every prospect of its poor inhabitants being provided with a place of public worship connected with our Establishment. It will be seen by the advertisement in our columns that the amount of

donations towards its erection is far below the estimated cost of the building. . . . The importance of a resident clergyman at the place becomes continually more evident. During the severe gales two vessels were wrecked on the sandbanks near the coast the crew of which was saved from a watery grave by the lifeboat stationed there, and which is generally manned by the people of the village.

As regards the advertisement referred we cannot do better than give a copy as it appeared at the time in the LIVERPOOL COURIER: -

“PROPOSAL TO BUILD AND ENDOW A FREE CHURCH, AND PROVIDE A MINISTERIAL RESIDENCE AT HOYLAKE”

It may not perhaps be generally known that there are in the neighbourhood of Hoylake between 400 and 500 people who live nearly three miles from the Parish Church of West Kirby, and for whom there is no Place of Worship within a nearer distance. The fixed inhabitants are almost universally of the very poorest order, earning a most scanty livelihood, by fishing in which perilous occupation many lives are lost, and by which they contribute to the supply of the markets of this town. There is no family resident near the place whose circumstances might enable them to contribute to the supply of the wants of these poor people, who present a fair claim to the kind consideration of the Merchants and other inhabitants of Liverpool, inasmuch as there is a lifeboat stationed there, in which, at a time of danger, they are ready to expose their lives to imminent hazard and have thus been permitted to be the instruments of saving the crews of many vessels that have been wrecked on that coast.

Under these circumstances, the Friends of Religion in Liverpool are earnestly invited to assist in building a Free Church, and in providing a Resident Clergyman.

A Lay Friend has placed £1,500 at the disposal of the Rev. C.L. Swainson, B.D., Minister of Edge Hill, for the Endowment of the Church, if the support of Christian Friends shall enable its erection. The same Friend has also given a Plot of Ground as a site for the Building, and a Cottage together with a few acres of Land, which may be converted into a residence for the Clergyman.

The work will be commenced as soon as the Donations of the Christian Public may justify those Gentlemen to proceed with it, who have formed themselves into a Committee to carry this object into effect.

The Presentation of the Church is vested in the Rev. C.L. Swainson, according to the Provisions made by the Act of Parliament passed during the last Session.

Donations will be received by the Rev. C.L. Swainson; at the office of this Paper; or by the following Gentlemen who form the Committee: “Mr. Josias Booker, Mr. Thomas Forsyth, Mr. Adam Hodgson, Mr. Parkins, Mr. Thomas Roberts, Mr. William Simmons, Mr. John T. Swainson, Mr. John Taylor, Mr. Wm. Winstanley, Mr. John Willis, junr.”

Then follows a list of subscribers amongst whom and the Committee are names of Liverpool's merchant princes of those days, and familiar to memory; Littledales, Horsefall, Hornby, John Eden (solicitor), Tyrer, Willis Swainson, and Tarbet, the latter being one of the ancestors of Mr. Tarbet now resident amongst us. From this advertisement it will be observed that Mrs. Swainson whilst giving all the land and providing for the Endowment subscribing largely to the building funds, appeal was made for financial help from many interested in Hoylake in those days.

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CONTRIBUTION No.23.

On the purchase of the Estate previously recorded by the Swainson family, Church Road was formed and continued right on to the shore from the point of Grove Road, and was subsequently adopted as a Township road and repairable by the inhabitants at large. The estate came into the market. Plots of land were sold and a rapid development of building soon became evident and gave rise to the name of "Newtown". The new residents were evidently of a pushing character, for in Church Road the first Post Office was opened, at No.62 now owned and occupied by Mr. Joseph Hazlehurst, the assistant overseer of the poor. The house was one of the first to be erected in this part, and was in the occupation of a gentleman named Hornby; the letters were posted through the window in the gable and in Back Sea View. Prior to this the letters were delivered in a most primitive manner, similar to that we read of in new born places in the backwoods of America and Australia. Upton, five miles away, was the centre of all business, and was a place of importance at this period; post letters were sent from this village by a man on horseback, who, on entering the village by the schools, blew a horn calling upon the Villagers to come for letters, and to hand into his bag any letter they wished to dispatch to their relatives and friends. We still have a few old residents remaining who recollect these ancient proceedings. No doubt, letters would be few nevertheless valued by the recipients, and interesting to the neighbourhood, who soon became aware of the news received from anyone in "furrin parts". How we have advanced since those days, from the occasional and uncertain delivery by the man on horseback to the three and four dispatches and deliveries of today.

In "Newtown" houses were put up in Grove Road, Back Sea View, Lake Place and Sea View, the latter becoming the fashionable quarter of well-to-do merchants of Liverpool and district. Sea View was more or less of a Sandy Hollow which admitted of cellars and cellar kitchens to the houses. Nos. 1 and 2 have to this day cellar kitchens still in occupation. Nos. 3, 4 and 5 were built by Mr. Bernard Sherwood at the time Chief Officer of the King, who was in charge of a section of preventative men to look after smuggling, wreckage and shipping in the locality. Sea View had at that time, a fine commanding view of the sea, with a fine stretch of land in the front known as "The new piece", and the dwellings attracted the best families of Liverpool. Plenty of rooms, and evidently built to accommodate a superior class of residents. At the back, in Back Sea View were stables and coach houses (now cottage dwellings) for each occupant kept their carriage and pair to drive in and out of town for business.

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CONTRIBUTION No.24.

Hoylelake at this date was highly patronized, chiefly on account of its health situation and its nearness to town. The Lairds and Jacksons of Birkenhead were frequent visitors whilst at No.62 Church Road, Alderman W.H. Watt and his family made this his summer quarters for many years in his younger days. These gentlemen were a source of much income to the fishermen, who supplied them with boating, fishing and other enjoyments on the water. Being men of influence they were always willing to give a measure of this influence to the natives, and it is pleasing to record how the older inhabitants speak in respectful terms of the gentry of those former days. Nos. 10, 11 and 12 Sea View also came into existence with the customary stables and coach-houses at the rear (again now cottages) • It was we think, No.10, so we are told by one of our readers - the information for which we must here thank the

writer - That the first chemist shop was opened for business but which was subsequently transferred to the one in Market Street, referred to in one of our earlier articles. To confirm our statement of the healthy, attractive character of Hoylake, it was at No. 13 that Sir William P. Hartley, the great jam manufacturer, resided summer after summer, and it was not until after the advent of the railway, which brought the place within reach of others not so well blessed with this world's goods, that the gentry gradually forsook the place for more distant resorts.

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CONTRIBUTION No.25.

In succession the remainder of Sea View was continued. Near here we find "The Grove", built early in the last century, the finest residence in Hoylake, standing in its own grounds, well provided with stables and a fine grove of trees, originally intended for a hotel, making provision for the numerous visitors who journeyed to Hoylake in order to embark, when a favourable breeze set in, for Ireland.

At the rear and situate in Grove Place, was the usual taproom, for the convenience of the travellers, servants and for the use of any of the villagers who cared to partake of refreshments, and there is no doubt at the time many a "jolly" hour was spent. The building still exists, and used as a dwelling. Some of the native families resided there and considered it quite a small mansion. On account of the formation of the road, the house now lies much below the level, and the easiest way of entering his abode is for the tenant to get over the boundary wall and drop down to the front door of his entrance.

For many years "The Grove" attracted the best of tenants by reason of its accommodation and for its fine garden and orchard. For many years it was the residence of Colonel Syers and his family, the owners. The Oddfellows and Shepherds in the yearly walk made this one of their visitations, marching up the carriageway, and parading in front of the house, being hospitably entertained by the host and his family. The Grove has been empty for several years, and a board on one of the trees beseeches the public to purchase and put life once more within its walls.

This we are afraid appears remote, and the possibility is that, sooner or later the house and stables will be levelled and the grounds fall into the hands of the builders. It seems to us that this would be a great misfortune. The neighbourhood is now fairly well congested, and to erect more dwellings will restrict the healthy lung of the district.

It is worth while the District Council and the public taking this spot into serious consideration, and saving the place for some future public utility. (Now the property of the Church for Church Institute and Hall). The price, we understand is low, and it is within the possibilities that its loss may be regretted. Should, however, the land fall to the hammer, we trust our Council representatives will take every precaution to prevent overcrowding, and secure improvements in street widenings, which here is much required.

Lake Place remains much about the same as when first built, the houses being much older in construction than Sea View. For many years the owner had to pay a rental to Lord Stanley for permission for the tenants to leave and enter the front entrance, the buildings coming right on to Lord Stanley's frontage. However, when the Rural Sanitary Authority caused Lake Place to be made as a street, the tribute was done away with, and Lake Place became a public street.

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CONTRIBUTION No.26.

In the vicinity of “The Grove” and Sea View we find the Coastguard Houses which came into existence about the year 1856. Prior to this the duties of Coastguards were carried out by a staff of men under the control of Mr. Bernard Sherwood, as Chief Officer, known as a preventative officer, and were formed about the year 1830. At this date Hoylake was becoming a place of importance as regards shipping. Parkgate, which had up to this time been a shipping centre, was gradually losing its place, except only for the Irish Coast Trade, and the officers on guard were removed to Hoylake, in consequence of the Liverpool ships making this a place of refuge before reaching Liverpool. It was then difficult and dangerous to enter the port, there being no well defined Channel, such as exists today, with the result that many ships entered the “Lake” to await favourable winds and tides, or to partially unload cargo into smaller vessels. The Lake was of considerable depth, and the largest vessel with her cargo consigned to Liverpool could ride afloat at low water immediately opposite to the “Royal Hotel” and so steep were the banks on either side of the Lake that the crews wishing to land had to climb on to the yard arms of the vessel and drop from the ends on to the land. The many arrivals of shipping necessitated the Revenues of the King being protected, so the preventative officers came into office. These men were put on board ships and prevented smuggling or illicit practices, and remained until the vessel sailed for Liverpool and discharged the cargo. Additional work also fell to their lot in rough weather when wrecks were numerous, and the natives frequently made raids on the wrecks or collected the spoils delivered up by the sea. This led to a great deal of secreting of goods in all sorts of places in gardens and sand hills. Sometimes a little ruse by the officers was resorted to such as “watchers are out”. Then the conscience of the wreckers was touched and the watchers had only to secure places of observation to see where the goods were hidden or being buried for the time being.

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CONTRIBUTION No.27.

At the time the only place of crossing the Lake at low water, otherwise than by boat, was at the Red Rocks, and it was here to Revenue Officers lay in wait for the wreckers, and many a fine haul was seized at this spot. The officers had only to await the arrivals burdened with spoil and to show themselves, whereon the wrecker dropped his cargo and made himself scarce. The officials, apparently, were not fond of prosecutions, as we rarely find any bringing to justice of the delinquents, although we have a shrewd suspicion that the offenders were known, but there was always a recognized failure of identification. As the entrance to the port of Liverpool was becoming more accessible to shipping, so the arrivals at Hoylake were clearly reduced, and the use of Preventative Officers less required, consequently a new system came into being in the form of Coastguards, raised out of H.M.Navy. About 1856 the Preventatives were superseded; most of them retired with a pension, and ended their days in the place, having many descendants living today. A few, however of the younger men were transferred to Liverpool and placed in the positions of Customs House Officers; even these in later years having qualified for superannuation, returned to Hoylake to enjoy their well-earned pensions. Unlike the Revenue Officers, who resided in private houses, the Coastguards were stationed in the present cottages, built by the Government, with an Officer of the Navy in charge; but even these are being done away with, not only in Hoylake, but all along the coast of the British Isles, these services, so far as Customs revenue, being no longer required. Any attempt at former practices is rarely exercised, and even then quickly nipped in the bud. We shall miss the Coastguards, for they were always a cheery class of men, willing at all times to give a helping hand in any direction, and the Sailor in uniform on

watch at the Coastguard Station will be known no more. The cottages are now let to and occupied by private tenants.

Proceeding westwardly in the direction of West Kirby, we come first to the Racecourse, the scene of many an animated gathering, but to many of the present residents only known as history. Before, however, we pass on to the Races we must draw attention to the "Green Lodge Hotel", situate in Stanley Road and immediately opposite to the principal entrance of the Racecourse. The Green Lodge is one of the oldest and best known hotels in Wirral, although not so old or historical as the Royal Hotel. The Lodge for quite a generation was in the hands of the Ball family, and "Old John", Young John and the Son-in-Law, Peter Theophilus Evans, sharing the continuous tenancy between them. At the time it was not so large as at present, a new wing having been added after Mr. Evan's death. During the occupation of Mr. Evans it was chiefly a family residential hotel, and was much frequented by well-to-do families from Liverpool. It was also a rendezvous for Sunday afternoon teas, many people journeying along the shore from New Brighton, or else driving by road to The Lodge for tea, which had then a well-known reputation.

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HOYLAKE IN THE 1860's.

The following is a transcription of some reminiscences of Hoylake written nearly twenty years ago.

" Hoylake fifty years ago was very different from what it is today. The writer remembers his first visit there in the summer of 1858, and staying at Sea View, which was then quite open and free of all houses and streets in front. Church Road was knee-deep in sand, almost from Grove Road to the shore, and there was a kind of sea front or wall built of tarred timber, which extended from the foot of Church Road to the Coastguard Station. This timber stood two or three feet above the loose sand and with a broad plank on the top served as a great amusement to the children visitors to play about on. There was little amusement of any sort. Now and then, at high tides, one saw the Rhyl steamers Lion and Sea King steaming through the Lake to save going round the East Hoyle Bank. There were also a Mostyn boat, the Satellite and a Holywell steamer, the Fanny, which went very often when the tide permitted, and thus saved a good many miles steaming. Sometimes Captain Ponsonby, of the Coastguard took out his boat for a sail and now and then the lifeboat turned out for practice. The water in the Lake being much deeper than now, there were many big trawlers and a smaller number of boats called nobbies not to forget the pretty little three-masted shrimpers with their red sails which have long since died out. Besides the above there were a good many schooners, flats etc., sailing to the Dee, which often anchored for the night when they missed the tide for getting over the Hilbre swash. When the writer stayed at Sea View he paid his first visit to Hilbre Island, as Mr. Steens, our landlord was owner of a trawler named the Ann Wignall, and he sailed us over one high tide in his punt. I was shown the shed where the Trinity House kept the spare buoys for the Dee channels, under, I think, a Lieutenant Barnett. Since then, of course, the Mersey Dock Board have taken over Hilbre Island. It Was very different then - clean sand in all the gutters which today are in many places thick black mud, especially the hundred yards from the gutter up to the island. There was a regular omnibus service to Birkenhead by a dark-coloured three-horsed vehicle driven by a man named Costello. There was also a green-painted opposition bus, which used to race the regular one. Several years later ('62 and '63) my family stayed on the Green at a house called Anchor Cottage next door but one to the Green Lodge Hotel. Our landlady was Mrs. Bartlemore, whose husband, then still alive, had been at the Battle of Waterloo. He had been in a cavalry regiment, and was a very old man, with all his faculties about him. The houses between us and the Royal Hotel were very few, and were the Gothic, the Black and White Cottage and

Mrs. Birkett's cottage. The racecourse was then in splendid condition and we children had a good time watching the exercising of the horses, for some weeks previous to the race day. In 1865 a great change had come about. The Stanley Hotel was built, and numerous villas and houses near the Upper Lighthouse and King's Gap Road. This same year the railway was nearly complete and the arrival of a very small four-wheeled locomotive was looked upon as a great wonder by the indigenous inhabitants, Of West Kirby, I will not say very much, except that from Hilbre Point to the Dee Inn there was one continuous stretch of sand hills, without the sign of a house, where now stands Riversdale and Lingdale Roads and numerous other edifices, including the Hydro".

W.E.S.BROWN

Addendum

This section has been added in an attempt to relate the Hoylake of Charles Roberts' time to the Hoylake of today.

Lighthouses

Three Hoylake Lighthouse locations are mentioned.

The Mockbeggar Lighthouse which was washed into the sea. It probably stood near to the submerged forest which has now also largely vanished into the sea.

The original upper Lighthouse was similar to Leasowe lighthouse (built 1763 and still standing), however around 1860 it was demolished using a method still used to fell some factory chimneys today. Bricks were removed from the base gradually replaced by wooden supports, when sufficient bricks had been taken away a fire was lit around the wood. The whole structure falling suddenly as the burning wood lost its strength. The replacement Upper Lighthouse on the same site built in 1865, now a private house in Valentia Road the light was last lit in 1886.

The Lower Lighthouse situated at the bottom of Alderley Road which though built to compliment the Upper Lighthouse did not survive until modern times; also built in 1865 it was demolished in 1922 having been last lit in 1908.

Charles Roberts would have been amused to see the most recent "Lighthouse" built as an embellishment on a new house in 2008 near to the Red Rocks end of Stanley Road.

Street and Place Name changes

Queens Road was formerly known as Prussia Road. An Ordnance Survey map of Hoylake from 1909 shows this road as Prussia Road. However, when the reminiscences were published it had been renamed Queens Road because at the time Britain was at war (1914-18) with Prussia. Prussia today is known as Germany.

There are many references to Church Road which was renamed Trinity Road sometime after Holy Trinity Church was built in 1833. Holy Trinity Church itself was demolished in 1976.

Grove Place is referenced as being formerly Back Sea View though today the name Back Sea View is used as well as Grove Place.

Early maps show Great Meols, Hoose and Little Meols covering the locality now known as Hoylake and Meols. Great Meols became Meols whilst Hoose, originally a small fishing settlement along with Little Meols became Hoylake.

The name Hoylake did not come about until the early nineteenth century. The earliest mention of the locality appears to around the time of King John when William Lancelyn granted fishing to the monks of St. Werburgh for "*lacus de Hildburgheye, qui vocatur Heye-pol*", the name referring to the lake between Hilbre Island and the mainland. It went through progressive changes Heye-Pol, High-Pool, High-Lake, Hyle-Lake, Hoyle-lake and eventually Hoylake.

The name “Meols” is derived from the Norse word for Sand Dunes, prior to development the greater part of the area was covered in sand dunes as is much of the coastal area between Liverpool and Southport even today. During the nineteenth and even early twentieth centuries there were heated arguments as whether the spelling should be “Meols” or “Meolse”.

The Legend of Hildeburgh

On the island of Hilbre, named after an unknown saint, St Hildeburgh, it has been suggested by some local historians that a Saxon monastic cell already existed prior to the Norman Conquest. The evidence for this essentially dates from the nineteenth century when a cross and grave cover were discovered, as well as a grave containing four skeletons, giving rise to a rumoured “Monks Graveyard”.

The carvings on the cross head however, have been dated to only around c1030, while the age of the skeletons has never been identified. While this suggests an early monastic link with Hilbre it is doubtful, there is enough evidence to suggest that it was perhaps a place of religious retreat and pilgrimage to a shrine of St Hildeburgh many years before being colonised by monks after the Norman conquest. St. Hildeburgh is described as an Anglo-Saxon holy woman though there is no hard evidence that she ever lived on Hilbre. There are several Hildeburghs mentioned in Saxon history but none of them stand out as being likely candidates for sainthood.

There are conflicting stories as to how Hilbre came to be named, none of them can be regarded as definitive. One possible version is that there was a small monastery on the island where several monks tended a light known as St. Mary’s light for hundreds of years, from well before the Norman conquest until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1538. During this time an Anglo-Saxon woman known as Hildeburgh visited the island monastery on a pilgrimage, the monks must have been impressed by her because they named the island after her. In 1538 the cell relocated to Chester leaving no evidence of its existence though a grave and cross were discovered in the 1800’s. The relocated monks founded a church which became Chester Cathedral. This version is plausible since after Britain first became Christian during the latter Roman era then came the Dark Ages when Christianity as a faith became secondary to the Norse gods. Monastic centres at that time would have retreated to isolated places such as Hilbre for relative safety. Hilbre would have been a suitable embarkation point for Christians fleeing to Ireland, following the Dark Ages Christianity spread back across Europe from Ireland. Hildeburgh could have been making her way to Ireland when she called at the island.

Churches (Church of England)

Before 1833 Great Meols (now Meols), Hoose and Little Meols (now Hoylake) were part of the Parish of West Kirby, St Bridget’s. Though there has been a church on the site of St. Bridget’s for around a thousand years the present church dates from 1870. In 1833 Holy Trinity Church was built through public subscription, it became the parish church in 1860. Around the turn of the century St. Hildeburgh’s (Stanley Road), St. John the Baptist (Meols) and St. Andrew’s (Meols Drive West Kirby) were built to cater for a growing population. In recent times church attendance has dropped, consequently Holy Trinity Church was no longer required and demolished (1976). The demolition of the church was a low point in Hoylake’s fortunes; in the early twenty first century though the Churchyard is still used for burials it no longer looks well cared for.

Public houses and Hotels

Various references are made to public houses some of which are no longer there.

The Green Lodge, the Lake Inn and the Ship Inn are still substantially as Charles Roberts would have known them.

The Royal, the Stanley Hotel and the Hydro (West Kirby) sites are now modern housing developments.

The Royal Hotel built in 1792 on Stanley Road had a frontage overlooking the Race Course and to the rear direct access to the sea for bathing. The lights of the hotel confused some mariners who mistook them for the light from the upper lighthouse. At the time the Royal Hotel was built it was at the end of Stanley Road, then a sandy track. The assumption is made that sea bathing mainly took place on the beach area behind the hotel. There are images of bathing machines, as used in Georgian Brighton, being used on the beach. The frontage onto Stanley Road being to the Red Rocks side of Beach Road; the hotel was demolished in 1958 to make way for the subsequent housing development known as the "The Royal". Victoria Road on the Red Rocks side of the Royal was renamed Coronation Road

The Stanley Hotel remained a hotel until the site was redeveloped around the time of the millennium.

The Punch Bowl in Market Street at the corner of Trinity Road has a long history. The original inn on the site was a small thatched building which was replaced in the nineteenth century by a Tudor style building. Pictures of the inn then show it protruding further onto Market Street. The present Punchbowl is much grander and set well back from the road.

The Railway Inn and the Dee Hotel (West Kirby) were rebuilt between the wars but in completely different styles. The Dee Hotel was tied to Walker Cain Brewery. The Railway Inn was tied to Birkenhead Brewery, a similar architectural style is found in other Wirral public houses at Arrowe Park and Pensby.

The Lighthouse (now an office) and the Anchor were closed in the late 1950's to be replaced by the Blue Anchor.

It is surprising that Charles Roberts never mentioned the Plasterer's Arms in Back Sea View, though there is mention of an unnamed tap room in Grove Place.

The Sloop Inn (in Meols) and the Iron house (opposite Carlton Terrace by the Cottage hospital) are no more. The Sloop Inn was located near Goose Green in the vicinity of Forest Road.

Stonebridge Cottage in Meols is no longer public house, today it is private house facing the start of Heron Road.

Houses long gone

The Dale estate in 1909 is shown facing the Promenade (North Parade) occupying an area now covered by Avondale Road, Dovedale Road and Clydesdale Road.

Sandhey is shown on the 1909 map occupying the area now covered by Sandfield Avenue, Woodland Avenue, and Firshaw Road near to the Meols Putting Green.

The Grove, this was in the area now covered by Grove Place and Grove Road.

Hoylake as a port

Until the late 1600's shipping in the Dee Estuary was more prevalent than in the Mersey. A chart drawn up in 1687 by Captain Grenville Collins. This chart showed a very different pattern of sandbanks to that we know today. Hilbre Island and the Hyle Bank protected the Hyle Lake providing a natural safe and relatively deep anchorage. Such a deep and safe anchorage that larger sailing ships of the period would off load part of their cargoes before sailing across the flats to the port of Liverpool. In 1689 an army, ten thousand horse and foot, was embarked from Hyle Lake for Ireland on the orders of King William III, King William himself embarked from Hoylake the following year, to deal with Kings James II who had landed in Ireland. That incident is the origin of the name "King's Gap". The subsequent confrontation in Ireland is better known as "The Battle of the Boyne".

In 1725 the Dee was canalized to give better access to Chester, this action accelerated the changing pattern of the sand banks pattern resulting in the progressive silting up of the estuary and by the mid 1800's the Lake was unsuitable for shipping. The port of Liverpool gaining prominence from around 1700.

Hoylake as a resort

Though Hoylake was in decline as a port it possessed a fine beach suitable for sea bathing. During the 1700's the medical profession declared that sea bathing was probably beneficial to the health, in 1792 Sir John Stanley built the Royal Hotel for those who wished to come to Hoylake for sea bathing. At sometime during the early 1800's the Green Lodge Hotel was built at the King's Gap end of Stanley to cater for an increasing number of visitors.

Between 1840 and 1876 Horse Racing took place on the warren facing the Royal Hotel on the site of the now Royal Liverpool Golf Club. The Royal Liverpool Golf club was founded in 1869 as a much smaller nine hole course on the land used for horse racing; as racing declined so golf boomed. Today the Royal Liverpool Course is world famous having hosted the British Open Championship several times.

Hoylake's fortunes as a resort town have changed over years. The shoreline and sea depth have changed and are still changing due to tidal and river actions so sea bathing and fishing have both declined. In 1913 an outdoor swimming pool was opened, rebuilt in 1931 remaining open until 1978, the Hoylake pool opened each year from the 1st May until the 30th September. Local children in the 1950's could have a season's swimming for seven shillings and sixpence (37½ pence), the outdoor pool temperature was often around 14c (52f) and rarely more than 20c (70f).

The coming of the railway, electrified in 1930's, allowed development of the town as a day trip destination providing a fresh air respite for the people of Liverpool. Hoylake also grew as a home for commuters to Liverpool.

Though both Hoylake and West Kirby are fondly remembered as Seaside Resorts they have avoided the brash vulgarity associated with the likes of New Brighton and Blackpool.

Reminiscences from the 1950's

In 1955 Norman Ellison published a book entitled "The Wirral Peninsula" in which he describes Hoylake as almost brand new. At that time there were still people living in the town who remembered the time when Hoose was just a small fishing village. Joseph Jones who passed away around that time

remembered when Hoylake had just two Streets, Market Street and Church (Trinity) Road. Many of the stories he used to tell are echoed in the reminiscences recorded by Charles Roberts some 40 years earlier. Many old Hoylake families have descendants living in the area. The names Eccles, Jones, Bird, Armitage, Sherlock and Beck are still to be found around Hoylake.

Extracts from a topographical Dictionary of England

This publication was printed in 1848 and lists alphabetically details of many places in England. At that time the name of Hoylake was barely known as such though there is a very brief mention.

Hoylake.—See Meolse, Little.

HOYLAKE.—See Meolse, Little.

Hoose

HOOSE, a township, in the parish of West Kirby, union, and Lower division of the hundred, of Wirrall, S. division of the county of Chester, 9½ miles (N. N. W.) from Great Neston; containing 444 inhabitants. This township, which comprises only 74 acres, of a sandy soil, is not mentioned in the Domesday survey; which may be attributed to its being so small, and lying between Great and Little Meolse, of which it was probably then a part. It has been in the possession of various persons, among others of the family of Glegg, of Irby; in 1812, the manor, and the greater part of the township, became the property of John Timothy Swainson, Esq., formerly collector of the Customs of Liverpool. The sea front of the three townships occupies a line of upwards of five miles, reaching from the western part of Wallasey to the village of West Kirby. The inhabitants of Hoose are principally boatmen and fishermen, who have frequently evinced the greatest courage and alacrity in rescuing mariners from the horrors of shipwreck; large banks of sand, extending for miles on the northwest, being annually the scene of most fatal disasters to shipping. The Liverpool custom-house has a branch establishment, or water-guard, stationed here. — See Meolse, Great and Little.

Meolse, Great

MEOLSE, GREAT, a township, in the parish of West Kirby, union, and Lower division of the hundred, of Wirrall, S. division of the county of Chester; containing 172 inhabitants. This place was granted to Robert de Rodelent, and was held by him at the Domesday survey. A family which settled here at a subsequent period assumed the local name, and continued to hold the manor as capital lords until nearly the close of the 17th century: it then passed by the bequest of Anne, their last heiress, to Charles Hough, a minor; and afterwards, through his issue, to Mr. John Ramsbottom, of Liverpool. The Stanleys of Alderley, and the Stanleys of Hooton, are now sole owners of the township. It comprises 750 acres. A part of it, which fronts the Irish Sea for upwards of two miles, consists of a narrow slip of sandhills, protected in some instances by embankments from the inundations of the sea: as it approaches Hoose, the slip widens, and becomes connected with that township.—See Hoose.

Meolse, Little

MEOLSE, LITTLE, a township, in the parish of West Kirby, union, and Lower division of the hundred, of Wirrall, S. division of the county of Chester, 9 miles (W.) from Birkenhead; containing 134 inhabitants. This township, like the preceding, was held by Robert de Rodelent; and after him, the Grosvenors and the Meolses became the capital lords of the soil. The mesne manor was held by the Lancelyns, of Poulton, and passed with their other manors and estates to Randal Greene in right of his wife Elizabeth, sole heiress of the Lancelyns. Little Meolse was afterwards sold to the Stanleys of Weaver; and is now, like Great Meolse, the property of the Stanleys of Alderley, and the Stanleys of Hooton. The township comprises 550 acres. The greater part was a waste, until Lord Stanley of Alderley granted a building-lease for a term of eighty years, which has led to the erection of several

pleasing villas. These, for summer residences and the convenience of excellent sea-bathing, notwithstanding the apparent want of attraction from their being seated amid sandhills on the desolate extremity of a mere promontory, are in great request, and a considerable increase may be anticipated in their number. In this township and Hoose is Hoylake, where his lordship's father erected, on the margin of the sea, one of the most spacious hotels in the county, now much frequented during the bathing season. A little to the north is a smaller hotel. A commodious church, also, has been erected by the lady of Mr. Swainson, which affords great accommodation to the inhabitants and the numerous visitors attracted hither, who before had no place of worship nearer than the parish church; it is dedicated to the Holy Trinity, and is a neat edifice in the Norman style, from designs by Mr. Picton, of Liverpool. The living is a perpetual curacy, in the gift of the Bishop of Chester, with an income of £100. In 1690, the Duke of Schomberg encamped with his army near Hoylake, previously to his embarkation for Ireland.

Kirby, West (St. Bridget)

KIRBY, WEST (*St. Bridget*), a parish, in the union, and Lower division of the hundred, of Wirral, S. division of the county of Chester; containing, with the townships of Great Caldey, Caldey-Grange, Frankby, Hoose, Great and Little Meolse, Newton with Larton, and part of Greasby, 1641 inhabitants, of whom 330 are in the township of West Kirby, 7½ miles (N. W. by N.) from Great Neston. The manor belonged to the convent of Basingwerk, and afterwards to the earls of Derby; several freeholders are now lords of the manor in rotation. The parish is from five to six miles in length, and from three to four in breadth. It is bounded on the north by the Irish Sea, and on the west by the estuary of the Dee; and from some rising ground about a quarter of a mile from the shore, extensive views are obtained of the Irish Sea, the river Dee, and the Flintshire and Carnarvonshire hills. The quality of the soil varies materially in different parts. In the townships on the sea-shore it is very light and sandy, and, being in a great measure sheltered by hills from the easterly winds, is particularly suited for the growth of early potatoes, for which the district has long been celebrated. Some extensive commons are yet unenclosed, and much even of the best land in the parish affords scope for improvement. The township of West Kirby comprises 639 acres, of which the soil is sand, with rock. The living is a rectory, valued in the king's books at £28. 13. 4.; net income, £703; patrons, the Dean and Chapter of Chester. The church was rebuilt in 1786. At Hoylake is a separate incumbency. The free grammar school in Caldey-Grange was founded in 1636, by William Glegg, who endowed it with land now producing £26 per annum; to which an annuity of £30 was added in 1679, by Thomas Bennett, who also left £24 per annum to buy gowns for twenty-four deserving persons. Both these latter sums are paid out of the proceeds of an estate, amounting to upwards of £200 per annum, the remainder being distributed among the poor.

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