

## WALKING ON WATER STREET, Part 7 From The Mariner's Tavern To The Liverpool Arms

*Graham Jones*

Those who are old enough to remember frequenting the Pierhead Station of the Overhead Railway may remember the nearby *Liverpool Arms* that existed until 1958 at the Water Street end of the Goree Warehouses. But our story begins two centuries earlier with the arrival of John Mann at a premises on the opposite side of Water Street and at the junction with Church Alley, an ancient passageway which led to the church of St Nicholas. John, a mathematical instrument maker (of quadrants and compasses) is listed there in *Gore's Directory* from



1787 and was one of the sons of the John Mann from whom Mann Island derives its name.<sup>1</sup> The shop of this instrument maker was part of a tiny building crouching at the foot of the Tower of Liverpool, and W G Herdman's lithograph shows John's oval plaque outside the premises.<sup>2</sup>

The 1800 directory indicates that John had also become a victualler, and in 1805 he began to be listed not only at his mathematical shop but also as the proprietor of the *Mariner's Tavern* which faced it across Church Alley. A view along the alley at a later date shows John's name on the tavern



wall.<sup>3</sup> By then the Tower of Liverpool was in an advanced state of decay and John's mathematical shop had gone. Writing of the Tower and the shop, Herdman noted that John was:

*the last resident in this ancient and venerable relic of antiquity; this small projecting Tower, as it was the latest addition to the main building, so it was the first removed, on account of its obstructing the thoroughfare down Water Street.*<sup>2,4</sup>



His little shop having fallen victim to a street improvement scheme, John Mann lived out his days as the victualler at the *Mariner's Tavern*, 1 Church Alley. Then, in 1821, *Gore's Directory* reads '*Maria Mann, 1 Stringer's Alley, Water Street*' (Stringer's Alley having become the new name for Church Alley in that year). Maria, his widow, appears to have survived him only briefly for, in 1823-25, the directories show '*Esther Mann, boarding house, 1 Stringer's Alley, Water Street*'. Esther was perhaps their daughter, choosing to try her hand at a different living, although her enterprise seems to have been short-lived, at least at this location.

In 1827 the directory shows that Joseph Roberts (previously a victualler at Greenland Street) had taken over the premises at Stringer's Alley, and it is Joseph who, in 1829, was the first to give it the name *Liverpool Arms*. Upon his death, Elizabeth Roberts continued to manage the premises for a few more years.



Then Robert Chambers, previously a coach proprietor and victualler at *Castle Inn North* on Scotland Road, is shown in the directories as having arrived in 1837. Known subsequently as the *Liverpool Arms Hotel* or the *Liverpool Arms Inn*, upon Robert's death Elizabeth Chambers continued as victualler from 1843 until the early 1860s, during which time the name of Stringer's Alley was changed to Prison Weint.<sup>5</sup> Herdman's 1859 view shows Elizabeth's premises, with the adjacent *Tower Vaults* and the corner of the newly erected *Tower Buildings* on the right.<sup>6</sup>



Whether Elizabeth outlived the premises is uncertain but the Post Office directory for 1864 does not list the *Liverpool Arms* there, whilst *Tower Vaults* - previously entered as 3 Prison Weint - is now shown as no 1. A year later Herdman's watercolour confirms the building's fate, its site giving warning of what would eventually befall the whole of the properties along that side of the alley together with all the warehouses that backed onto them along Georges Dock Gates North.<sup>7</sup>

The *Liverpool Arms* must have been judged to be an attractive name, for the 1864 Post Office directory shows that scarcely had the original been demolished than two others of the same name popped into existence. One was at 22 Drury Lane, opened by an enterprising Miss Kate Porter, whilst the other was at the end of the Goree Piazzas (at that time listed in the directories as 27 & 29 Water Street), having been opened by John Martin, wine and spirit merchant, who had a warehouse on Georges Dock Gates North.

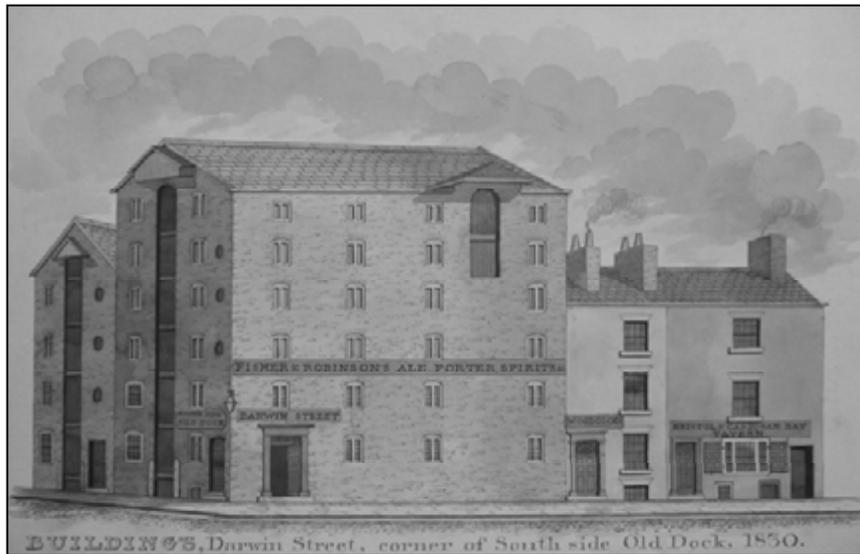
For many years 22 Drury Lane had been a boarding house. By 1859 it had become the *Cardigan Bay Vaults*, whilst in 1862 it was listed as the *Globe* before Kate Porter renamed it in 1864. However it appears that Kate's enterprise was very short lived for, in Gore's 1865 directory, she had been replaced by Charles Parry.

Charles and subsequently Mary Parry were victuallers from 1865 to 1873, and a detail from another of Herdman's delightful watercolours captures his name on the pub's sign in 1867.<sup>8</sup>



After Mary's departure this particular *Liverpool Arms* had a somewhat mixed history, with the pub changing hands at least 14 times over the next 20 years. By the mid 1890s it and its neighbours had been replaced by more modern buildings which were themselves later to be ushered out of existence, along with the Corn Exchange, by the Luftwaffe in WWII.

The rival *Liverpool Arms* which was located at the end of the Goree Piazzas had a rather more settled life, with a succession of only seven publicans maintaining the premises between 1864 and its demise in 1958. Much can be gleaned from the directories about its first proprietor, John Martin. John had begun his career in 1825 as a provision dealer in the firm of Fisher and Robinson, wine and spirit merchants, whose premises on the south side of the Old Dock were recorded in 1830 in one of James Brierley's pen and ink drawings.<sup>9</sup>



John became a partner and remained with the firm until he began to list himself in the directories from 1839 as an independent wine & navy provision merchant with an office at 39 Water Street.<sup>10</sup> Evidently his business prospered for, as with many merchants of the time, he soon went to live over the water, settling in Liscard.

Then, in the 1850s, John obtained a warehouse on Georges Dock Gates North and also transferred his office to 26 Water Street - next door to Elizabeth Chambers at no 24 - a move that would become significant a few years later. His office and warehouse were therefore a matter of a few yards apart and, again, it is thanks to the Herdman family that we have a view of his premises - in this case in 1867.<sup>11</sup>



To the left of John's premises can be seen one of Robert Cain's warehouses and to its left the Merchants' Coffee House which stood in St Nicholas' Church Yard. By 1862 John's business had sufficiently prospered for him to be listed in the directory as '*John Martin & Co, wine & navy provision merchants and shipowners.*' However, with the demolition of the *Liverpool Arms* in Prison Weint and the departure of Elizabeth Chambers, John took the opportunity to open his new *Liverpool Arms* at the Goree whilst additionally enjoying regularly moving home, with a particular liking for Claughton. Then finally, in 1876, having perhaps sensed that his life was drawing to a close,<sup>12</sup> John is shown as having taken William Roberts into partnership, for it is now William who is listed as '*merchant (John Martin & Co)*' and as the victualler at 27 Water Street and 1a Goree Piazzas.

William Roberts was the son of Catharine and John Roberts, listed as a pilot at Smith Street, Kirkdale in 1859. Following his father's death, William continued to live with his widowed mother and began his working life in 1865 as a book-keeper. In 1867 he was taken on as a partner by Charles Whitnall, a wine and spirit merchant, at their office at 12 Rumford Place.<sup>13</sup> The 1864 and 1865 directories show that Charles Whitnall's premises had been 27 & 29 Water Street - where John Martin had also opened his *Liverpool Arms* - and it is this overlap between Charles and John which perhaps enabled William later to be introduced to John and which eventually led to their partnership.

Between 1867 and 1875 William became the publican at the *House of Hanover* at the junction of Price Street and Hanover Street and then, in 1876, came his move to the *Liverpool Arms*. Quite how important this second pub remained in William's interests, compared to his wine and spirits merchant's business, is unclear because although from 1884 he continued to list himself at the Goree Piazzas (the Water Street end of which by then had become known as the Gladstone Buildings) he stopped entering the *Liverpool Arms* in the hotels section of the directories.

It would take a further decade for the name to emerge once more thanks to a certain Catherine. Quite how she spelled both her first name and surname apparently taxed the directory compositors who managed over the five years she was the publican (1894-1899) to enter her as both Catharine and Catherine and as Dennerley, Denerley and Dennerly.

Following Thomas Hall's arrival in late 1899 the pub moved quietly into the 20th century blissfully unaware of the war that would come 15 years later. Thomas stayed as proprietor until the latter part of WW1 and it is from that period - in 1907 - that the first image of the building appeared as an advertisement for *Threlfall's Liverpool and Salford Ales*.<sup>14</sup>

Then, with the departure of one Thomas the pub saw the arrival of another in 1918. This Thomas - Thomas Griffiths - also remained for almost two decades and witnessed the building's listing change from



29 Water Street & 1 Goree Piazzas (up to 1925) to 29 Water Street & 2 The Strand (from 1927), a designation it retained for the rest of its life. It was also during this period that this part of the building received a face-lift, as the 1929 City Engineers photograph shows.<sup>15</sup> Port-hole style windows, for example, had replaced the originals on the fourth floor whilst a huge advertising sign became a feature at fifth floor level.



In 1937 Robert Johnston Patterson took over as publican and two years later, on the eve of WWII, the artist John Pride recorded a view of the *Liverpool Arms* from the western side of the Overhead Railway.<sup>16</sup> His picture, in glorious colour, has a tranquility which wartime devastation would obliterate forever. A pair of horses can be seen pulling a cart loaded with bags of sugar whilst a man holding his red flag walks ahead of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board locomotive which is pulling trucks carrying more sugar bags. A Liverpool Overhead Railway train peeps into view on the right and lunchtime groups of workers on the left are strolling past the pub. And the Goree Arcades are complete.



May 1941 saw the end of the whole of the southern section of the Arcades between Brunswick Street and James Street, whilst only the pub and its immediate neighbours survived the bombing which destroyed half of the northern section between Water Street and Brunswick Street.

The war over, a 1947 handwritten letter<sup>17</sup> preserved at the Liverpool Record Office (LvRO) reads:

*In connection with the impending demolition of Goree Piazzas, Alderman Shennan is very anxious that, having regard to the historic association of these buildings, there should be a very full photographic record of them before demolition takes place. Will you please make sure that the CE&S is informed.*

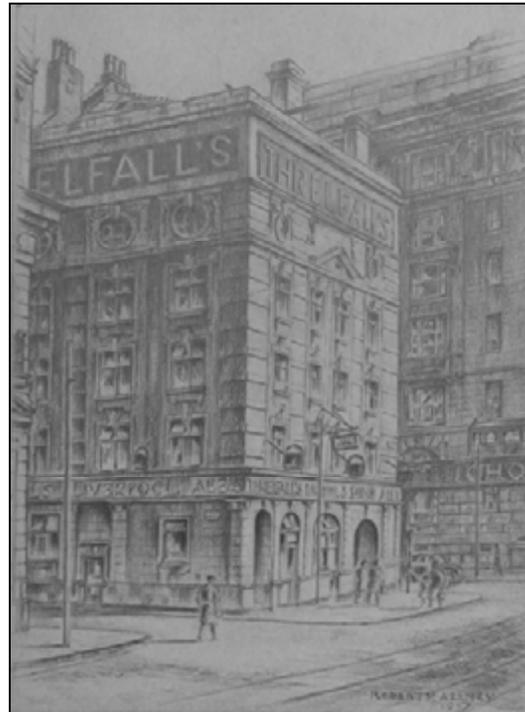
A week later, on 10th October 1947, photographing commenced, and the LvRO photographs provide a sombre and lasting memory of a small part of the devastation that Liverpool suffered and its people endured. By 1949 all but the *Liverpool Arms* and the two adjoining warehouses had been cleared away.<sup>18</sup>



The pub stood proudly for another decade, defiantly resisting its site being turned into yet another temporary car park.

Robert Saville was the last recorded licensee from 1955 but, inevitably, the building finally succumbed and the pub was no longer listed in the directories from 1958.

Robert Allmey's sketch of the *Liverpool Arms* in 1957, with the Cunard Building watching from a respectful distance beyond the remnants of a similarly fated overhead railway, provides a final memory of what for so long had provided welcome refreshment to passers-by in Water Street.<sup>19</sup>



- <sup>1</sup> John Mann the father is listed in the 1767 edition of *Gore's Directory* as a stick maker at 'west side old graving dock' which is shown as having been renamed Mann Island by 1774 and by which time he had become an oilstone dealer. For mid-nineteenth century views of Mann Island see Kay Parrott, *The Art of W G and William Herdman*, The Bluecoat Press, 2005. John Mann the son is first listed in 1781 at 3 Mann Island, the same address as his father.
- <sup>2</sup> W G Herdman, *Pictorial Relics of Ancient Liverpool*, 1856, plate 2, dated in the text on p 30 as a copy of an 1804 drawing by James Boardman.
- <sup>3</sup> Anon, *The Tower in Water Street*, Binns Collection, Vol 9, LvRO ref Hf 942.7204. Undated, the view must be between 1815 (the arrival of the new spire to St Nicholas' Church according to Richard Brooke, *Liverpool as it was during the last quarter of the eighteenth century*, Mawdsley & Son, 1853, p 44) and 1820 (the demolition of the Tower of Liverpool). For another view along Church Alley, see LvRO Herdman Collection 184.
- <sup>4</sup> W G Herdman, *Pictorial Relics of Ancient Liverpool*, 1878 vol 1, p 8 indicates that the Tower continued as a prison until 1810 "when all occupation for any purpose, except the small shop of the optician, was discontinued." Ronald Stewart-Brown (*The Tower of Liverpool*, 1910, p 41) believed that the shop was "tenanted by a spectacle-maker, James Mann by name" although the directories do not list a James Mann, and Stewart-Brown presumably took Herdman's reference to an optician as meaning spectacle-maker, rather than a maker of optical instruments, although perhaps he had made spectacles as well.
- <sup>5</sup> The names of the alley on maps appear at different times to those in the directories. For the latter the name was Church Alley until 1821, then Stringer's Alley until 1847 and finally Prison Weint (or Wient) until it was abolished in 1908 with the arrival of Tower Building (architect W Aubrey Thomas who also designed the Royal Liver Building) which today occupies the site of the alley.
- <sup>6</sup> LvRO: Herdman Collection 714. Tower Buildings was completed in 1857 (architect James Picton) and demolished in 1907 to make way for Tower Building.
- <sup>7</sup> The warehouses along Georges Dock Gates North were finally demolished in the early 1880s and the name of Georges Dock Gates lives on now only as the section of expressway running between the Royal Liver Building and Tower Building and linking The Strand to New Quay.
- <sup>8</sup> The image is a detail from a watercolour by William Herdman. LvRO: Herdman Collection 570, 'Drury Lane, W side, from Brunswick Street to Old Ropery, 1867'. The site is now occupied by the water feature at Beetham Plaza.
- <sup>9</sup> Image courtesy of the Athenaeum from the Brierley Collection. This delightful series of ca 80 drawings can be seen in David Brazendale's book, *Brierley's Liverpool*, recently published by Carnegie.
- <sup>10</sup> No 39, which remained listed as John's office until 1855, was the last

odd-numbered building in Water Street, was therefore on the south side and was presumably part of the Goree Warehouses to which John would later return.

<sup>11</sup> LvRO: Herdman Collection 36B.

<sup>12</sup> John Martin's directory entries between 1873 and 1875 give his home address as Kenyon Place, Devonshire Road, Claughton. In 1876 it is shown as being occupied by Miss Mary Martin and in 1877 by Rev Henry Martin. They were possibly John's daughter and son.

<sup>13</sup> In the same year, 1867, with the American Civil War having ended, another business at 12 Rumford Place was the firm of Bulloch and Robertson, commission merchants. When, a decade later, William was publican at the *Liverpool Arms* he perhaps enjoyed recounting to his clientele the stories which the famous (or infamous) James Dunwoody Bulloch perhaps told him about the construction in 1862 of the Confederate raider, *CSS Alabama*, at Laird's shipyard in Birkenhead.

<sup>14</sup> C R Hand, *Olde Liverpool and its Charter*, Hand & Co., 1907, p 84, reprinted by the Book Clearance Centre. The LvRO also has an image from July 1913 in its collection of City Engineer and Surveyor's Dept Improvements Section photographs, under Photographs & Small Prints (P&SP).

<sup>15</sup> LvRO: *Goree Piazzas from St Nicholas' Church*, City Engineer's Dept, 1929.

<sup>16</sup> LvRO: Pride Collection 94.

<sup>17</sup> LvRO: Accession 2868, dated 3rd October 1947. Photographing of the remnants of the Goree warehouses commenced 10th October 1947 and the collection now forms part of the LvROs extensive P&SP.

<sup>18</sup> LvRO: City Engineer and Surveyor's Dept, 28th May 1949 (P&SP).

<sup>19</sup> LvRO: LIC 141. *Liverpool Arms from Water Street 1957*, Pencil drawing by R M Allmey.



*The Strand in 2014, with the Liverpool Arms and the Liverpool Overhead Railway long since gone.*