




BRIDGING THE GAP

The Liverpool story
no one told you...

pool

LIVERPOOL PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE



BRIDGING THE GAP

The People's History, a Forgotten Story

King John had just made a property investment. He had given several existing places town status but he created Liverpool, a new town on a Greenfield Site¹.

With a charter status of freedom from lordly interference, he built 6 streets, and, so that the town could develop, he gave the township rights to take rent and tolls. He advertised for settlers from anywhere to buy a plot to live on and a share of the town field.

People came, mainly from nearby manors.

The next King Henry III, was short of cash. He sold the township and its income to the Earl of Chester, who could spend the town's income as he chose². William Ferrers³

bought the Lordship of the town and built an enormous castle at the top of what is now Lord Street. Because the township was sold as an investment opportunity to various wealthy families, Liverpool had no money to develop and stayed a small place of between 400 and 1,000 people.

In 1632 the Molyneux family got the rights to the town. During the civil war (1642-1644) half Liverpool's population was killed. The Molyneux family were on the losing side and stayed in their Croxteth estates. When peace returned they built a street named Lord Molyneux Street from the Castle,

which they had long ago left derelict, to what they thought was their tidal pool.

Lord Molyneux⁴ told the people he would build a bridge across the pool so that he could develop land on the other side. The people protested that the other side of the pool was their common as of right. Lord Molyneux was not a good landlord, his brother was accused of murdering 8 poor people, the castle was falling down, and had become a doss house. If he continued to build a bridge the townspeople would knock it down. Lord Molyneux did build his bridge using stone stolen from the common.

The people sent Edward Marsh and James Whitefield to knock it down.⁵ Lord Molyneux sent Edward and James to prison and took them to court. The Mayor and Edward Moore bailed them out and hired solicitors to argue for them and the town's rights.⁶ On 20th March 1672 Caryl Lord Molyneux settled out of court giving up the township of Liverpool to the people and agreeing that the people had common rights to the land across the tidal pool.⁷ He gave back all the rights to collect rent and tolls and agreed to pay rent to build a bridge and to build on the common. Liverpool at last had money to expand.⁸

1. 1207 end notes VCH Lancs IV p.3 / 2. 12 29 endnotes VCH Lancashire IV. 3.p3 / 3. 12 35 endnotes as above

4. 23rd March 1668p.887 townbooks / 5. 14th October 1669 p.909 town books (we presume as it was reported on 15th that Edward and James knocked the bridge down the day before) / 6. 18th January 1669 p. 909 / 7. Okill's survey 1822 from appendices / 8. See Liverpool 800 ed John Belcham Liverpool University Press 2006 and Liverpool town books 1649 – 1671 ed. Michael Power The record Soc Lancashire. Scouse Press, Liverpool packet 2 and do visit Liverpool Record Office



Marsh and Whitefield

Liverpool folk heroes

Edward Marsh and James Whitefield were the two citizens who were told to pull down Lord Molyneux's bridge. While this could be seen as a gesture of justice on Lord Molyneux's complaint, Marsh and Whitefield were arrested for this act by his majesty's Court of Exchequer at Westminster. On 15th October 1669, Mr John Sturzaker, deputy Mayor and Edward Moore, gave a bond to bail them out of prison and Arthur Borren and Samuel Fazakerley, town clerk were employed as solicitors at the towns expense to safeguard Marsh and Whitefield's rights, and hence the towns, in this affair. Four years later in 1672, the case was settled out of court.

Edward Marsh and James Whitefield are Liverpool folk heroes. Knocking down the bridge gave Liverpool back its income as of right. However very little is known of Marsh and Whitefield, they may have worked for the deputy mayor, John Sturzaker, who instructed them to pull the bridge down. They did not attend council meetings so they were of no particular standing within the town that could have exerted any influence. They were probably commoners living in a one or two roomed hut with their family, wore one set of clothes and owned a mug, a knife and a plate. As commoners they had an extraordinary effect on Liverpool's development bringing the common rights and rightful income back into the town's control.

Who has the control today?



What was Liverpool like?

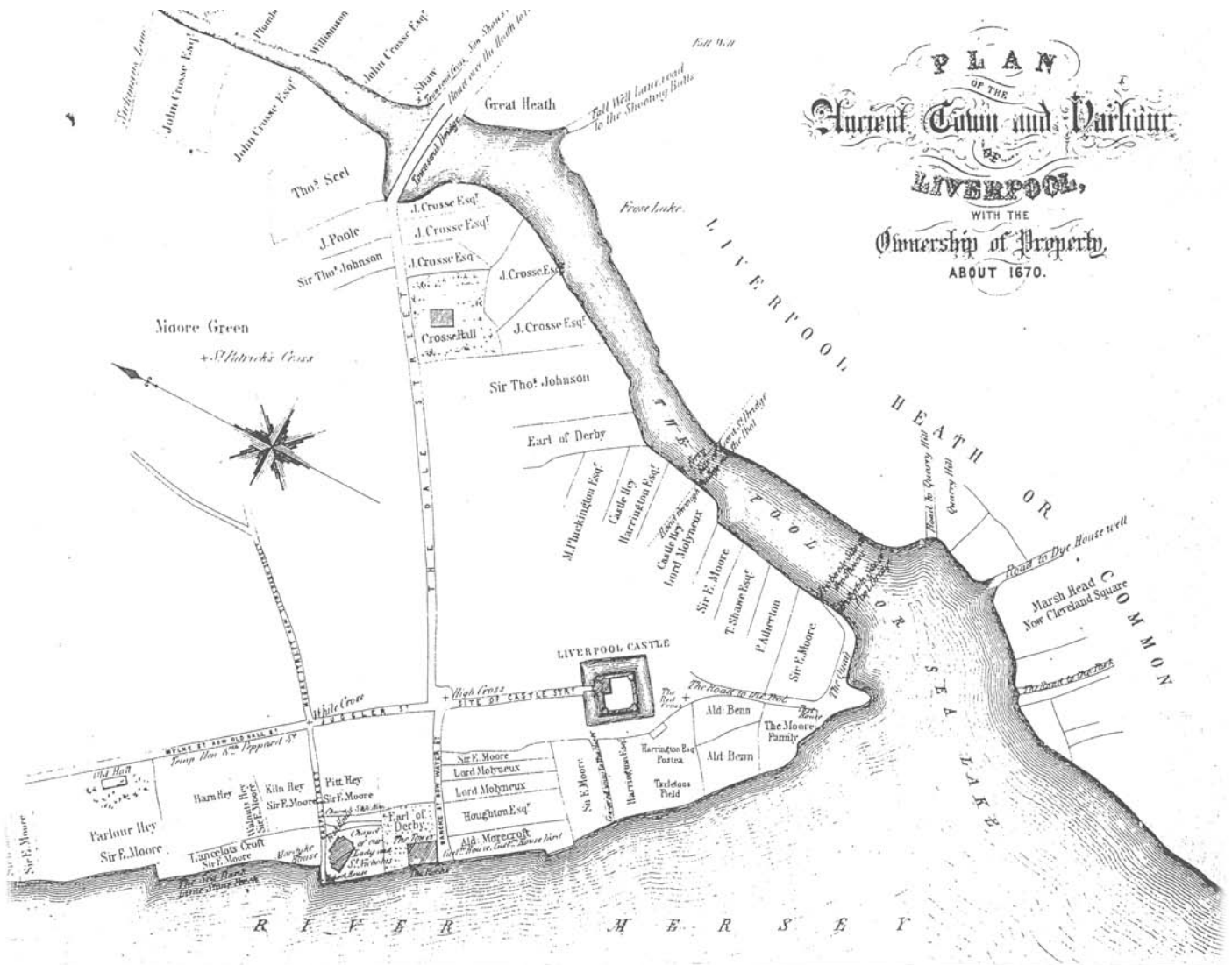
During its first 400 years, apart from plague and civil war the population of Liverpool remained around 1,000 people living in cottages made with wood clay and bricks. People had very few possessions, even the merchants; we know this through what was bequeathed in wills.

William Secum a merchant of Haberdashery, spices, stationery and dyes, left playing tables, two pictures, a looking glass, £9 worth of silver.

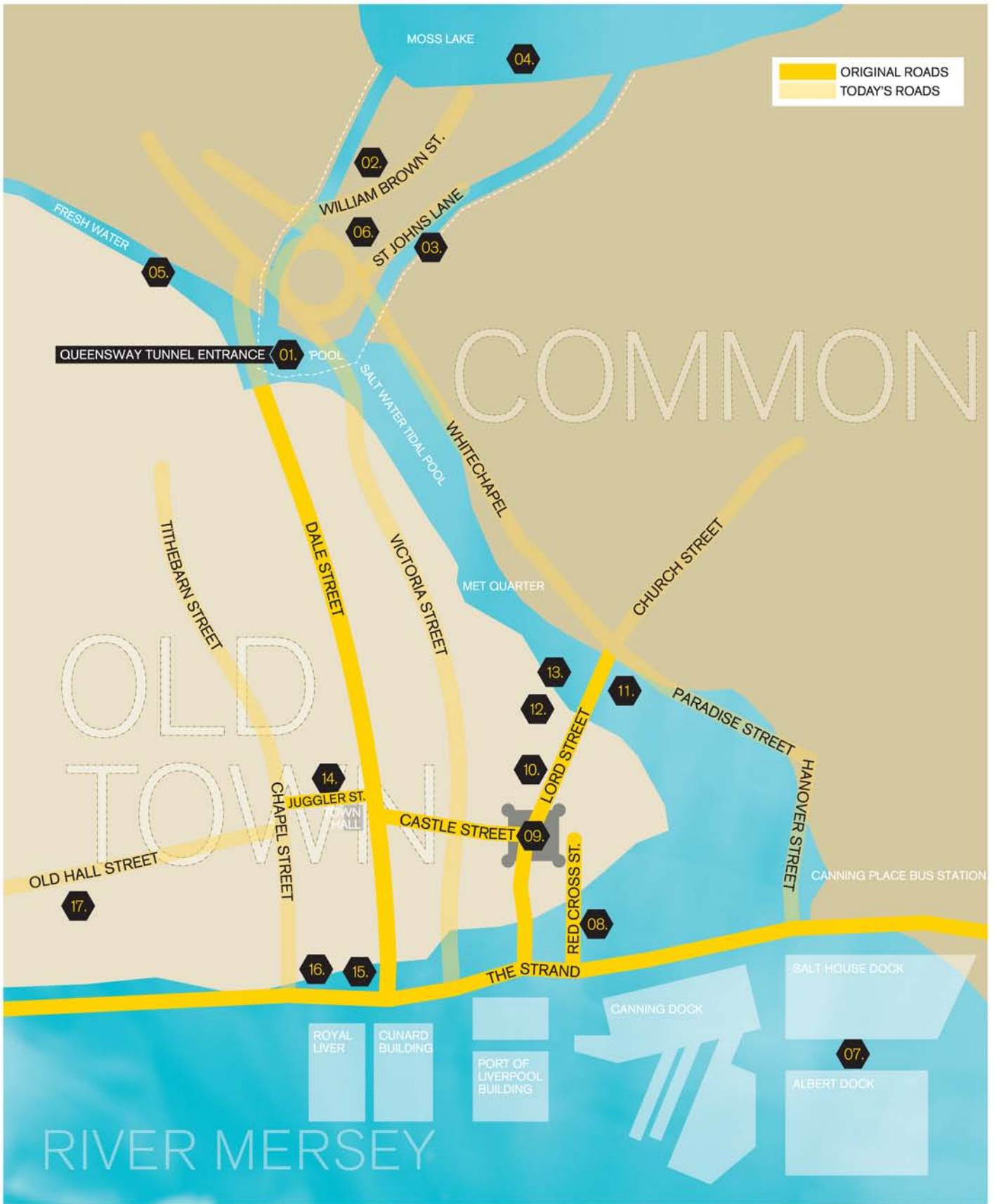
Richard More, one of the wealthiest people in the town listed: a wardrobe valued at £15, a stuff gown, four pairs of breeches, two doublets, two jerkins, a cloak, a horseman's coat, a pair of silk stockings, three shirts, two hats, a coarse waistcoat, two pairs of boots, a pair of shoes, a pair of garters and a sword.

This seems very little by today's standards and most would have been made locally or passed down from other family members.





When Marco Polo, the famous traveller, was setting sail from Venice to meet Kublah Kahn in Beijing, Liverpool barely existed. In the 1200s it was a hilly land with a south facing sheltered pool gouged out from fast streams running down from moss lake, now Brownlow Hill, down either side of what is St John's Gardens. King John created the new town in 1207 and invited settlers to come from anywhere but the nucleus was formed by tenants from nearby West Derby who were encouraged to move into Liverpool's plots. Establishing the settlement took about three years, 12d for each plot that also included one Cheshire acre in the town field which made quite a generous holding. The settlement was made with the establishment of the castle by the local Ferrers family in the 1230s.



Map references

01. Tunnel entrance, Manchester Street, Dale Street, Old Haymarket – the area that is the original ‘pool of Liverpool, carved out by fresh water streams which used to run down William Brown Street and St Johns Lane 03. from Moss lake 04. at the top to the hill behind Lime Street Station, spreading from London Road across to Upper Parliament Street. 02.

05. The tidal inlet or pool was also sluiced out by streams coming down from Everton and running down Byrom Street.

A saltwater tidal inlet from the Mersey ran inland from Canning Place, along Whitechapel and Paradise Street to the pool. 06. St Johns Gardens is all that remains of the common land across the tidal inlet.

Salthouse and Albert Dock 07. – all this area from the Strand, including the Liver building, were under water.

Red Cross Street, 08. one of the early streets, gives an idea of how steep the cliffs were and you can look up and imagine the Law Courts as the castle up above.

09. The castle, look at the plan of the Castle Street end of Queens Square, the little population of cottages must have been completely dwarfed by it. It was the biggest ground plan in the city until the building of the Anglican Cathedral. In 1229 a financially desperate Henry III sold the rights to Liverpool’s income of rents and tolls to the Earl of Chester. Edmund of Lancaster acquired the castle and put up the fees. The people of Liverpool were then paying into a private pocket what should have been the income to maintain and develop the town.

The castle controlled all sides of the peninsular, the sea entry to the Mersey, the entry to the tidal pool, and the little town, also the hills rising beyond the tidal pool behind Lime Street station.

10. Top of Lord Street, this area used to be the castle apple orchard, looking down to the tidal pool. After the Civil War amnesty was agreed and the Molyneux family came back to claim what they perceived as their land. They did not show any willingness to maintain their property but built a road from the apple orchard down to the tidal pool.

11. At this spot the tidal pool was wide, a stretch of water running parallel to Paradise Street and Whitechapel (from BHS and going across to MacDonald’s). The townspeople were very annoyed when Lord Molyneux proposed to build a bridge and develop land across the pool. This resulted in the townspeople knocking down his bridge.

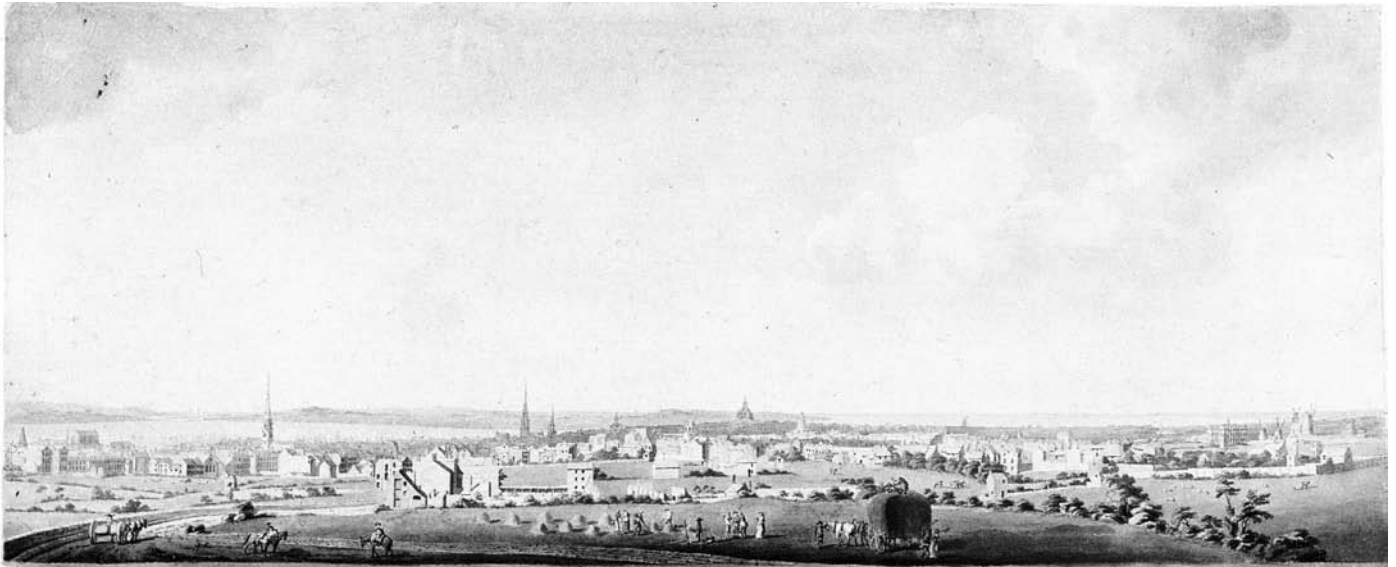
12. This area around Cavern Walks is symbolic of the narrow shambles that grew up in the old town, arguments grew about the need to clear ballast from the tidal inlet and stop the dumping of rubbish. Boat builders fenced off bits of shore and built sheds. 13.

14. Juggler Street – site of the first community hall 15. Stanley’s Tower

16. St Nicholas Church 17. Moore’s Hall

imagine... what would it be like today?
Liverpool's namesake...

picture... boats sailing up Paradise Street and
Whitechapel and anchoring in the pool



What we do

'pool explores, reveals and celebrates the origins of the city that has forgotten its namesake. 'pool invites you to join in walks, picnics and celebrations to rediscover the city. 'pool encourages discussion about the past in order to influence the future.

For more information about 'pool visit www.poolproject.co.uk

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