

HULL'S OLD TOWN DOCKS AND TRANSMIGRATION

Before the 17th century trade was carried out in Hull from privately owned wharves on the River Hull and a wealthy merchant class built up and lived on the nearby High Street. These wharves were inadequate for bigger vessels and an expanding trade and town centre docks were thought to be the answer. The Old Harbour, as the lower part of the River Hull reaching the Humber Estuary was called, became overcrowded and congested with bigger and bigger boats. You must bear in mind that workers lived in Town Centres and there was no such thing as commuting to work and so the notion of Town Docks was born.

The first dock, which at the time was the largest in the Country, was the Old Dock, later called Queens Dock and now Queens Gardens. The dock was designed by John Grundy and opened in 1778. At this time access to the sea was via the River Hull and in 1829 via a bridge (Monument Bridge) and through a lock pit, eventually to the Humber Dock and the Sea. Queens Dock closed in 1930 and was filled in to form the Gardens.

The Queens Dock Basin still exists (behind the technical college) soon to be the new location Hull's historic trawler Arctic Corsair.

The second Hull town dock was the Humber Dock, now the Marina which opened in 1809 (designed by John Rennie and William Chapman. It was accessible from the Humber via a basin (this still exists today to access the Marina).

The excavated soil formed all the land to the south of Humber Street which leads on to the Pier area.

The third Dock linked these two together and at first carried the name Junction Dock was opened in 1829 and was designed by James Walker. The name was changed to Princes Dock in 1854 following the visit of Queen Victoria. Princes Dock walls are complete although much is occupied by Princes Quay a shopping centre.

The final town dock was the Railway Dock, an extension to Humber Dock (now incorporated into the Marina), opened in 1846 to serve the needs of a rapidly growing rail system, and was the link between sea and rail.

The end of commercial Whaling around 1840's led to the terminal decline of these docks although it took over 100 years. Queens Dock closed and was filled in, in 1930, the Junction Dock (Princess Dock) was used for fitting and re-fitting trawlers until the mid 1970's. Princes Quay Shopping Centre and the Marina were opened in the early 1990's

The main purpose of the Railway dock was to connect Hull's freight imports to the rest of the country. In the 1840's the docks provided a questionable 'benefit' to the City. It became the northern centre for mass immigration from Northern Europe to North America.

TRANS-IMMIGRATION 1840's to 1914

Perhaps we might want to consider life in Hull in the 1840's. In the summer of 1849 death stalked every street of Hull, while gravediggers worked around the clock and long queues formed at the cemetery gates as families tried to mourn their dead.

July, August and September of that year saw cholera epidemic which, eventually, claiming more than 1,860 lives.

It was with that backdrop that the sad and bedraggled Immigrants arrived in Hull from the continent, so it's little wonder that the local citizens were fearful of this new threat. For that reason the immigrants were marched somewhat unceremoniously up the side of the Marina (then Humber Dock) and across what is now the A63, and into the town. Many of them were then taken to the **Lazarus Hotel** in Posterngate, off Trinity Square.



This is the building as it stands today, not as a hotel but now as commercial offices. There is a blue plaque on a wall of the Lazarus Hotel commemorating and explaining its historical significance.



The next step for these brave pioneers (for that is what they were) was to be frog march, with a police escort, to Paragon Railway Station and a specialty built reception centre. This reception centre is still there today, it's now a bar known as the **'Tigers Lair'** named after Hull City the local football team (known as the Tigers).

inimal! The immigrants were then hustled onto trains bound for Liverpool and onwards to North America.

This seemingly undignified treatment was deemed necessary in the 1840's. This was a time before inoculation and quarantine, and the rapid spread of disease was an ever present risk to the local population.

The goods railways were on the right hand side of the Marina. As you face towards the Humber there you will see the large fairly isolated warehouse – No.13. It has been converted into luxury flats and a restaurant. No. 13 was a dockside warehouse when it was called the Humber Dock, a commercial dock connecting to the estuary via a lock pit. At the side of this warehouse lay a major goods station and beyond this, a network of sidings and freight lines connecting to Paragon Station and all lines West.

Near here are lines sunk into the road running down the side of the Marina towards the river. These lines swing left, across the lock pit to Humber Street and it's warehouses (later to become the fruit market) and back up the dockside towards what is now the A63.

This was part of an extensive railway system serving the Humber Dock and the Railway Dock. Goods wagons were turned on small turntables and you can see one outside Warehouse 13.

Occasionally you will have to wait at the crossing bridge between the Marina and the estuary to allow boats from the Humber in and out of the Marina.

Back up towards the Green Bricks pub on the eastern side of the Marina and the A63 dual carriageway; this was once the original railway line round the dock. They then swung back across the lock pit and up to the west side. These lines were exposed during the alterations to the area made in readiness for The Hull City of Culture in 2017.



The west side of the Marina (known as The Quays) has many modern buildings, but Warehouse No 13 is still dominant in the landscape. As mentioned already, it has been sympathetically restored and converted. If you look inside the entrance to the restaurant, you will see a wonderful old photograph on the stairs of the many steam engines of the period which served a very large goods railway network.

If you were to head further up the dock towards the A63 main road you would cross a modern copy of a Dutch bridge, next to the Holiday Inn. To your left and in front of that is an extension to the Marina (then Humber Dock) which was called the Railway Dock. This dock served as a link between rail freight and the docks until the turn of the century, when bigger docks were built on the waterfront both to the east and west of the city. You can walk around this dock, the Northern side of which is now the back of the Holiday Inn. Perhaps you can visualise it as it was in the late 1800's - a busy bustling commercial dock.

To return, re-cross the Dutch bridge and walk down the side of the Marina to the end, then left across the bridge and back to the Minerva pub. It's well worth having a good look round here.

In conclusion; the docks were built from the end of the 1700's. At first using horse drawn wagons and later steam locomotives. The whole area was served by an extensive rail network and it continued right up to around 1900 when bigger docks, mainly on the east side of the River Hull thus removing commercial trade from this area and rendering it's rail system obsolete.

Jf 2023