

A STROLL DOWN ALBION STREET – 1892

We stand at the corner of Albion Street and Bond Street, looking towards the magnificent Royal Infirmary, visible at the end of Albion Street. The year is 1892. Hull is a prosperous city, and this is her finest street. It was built more than a century ago, on land belonging to the tobacco manufacturer, Mr Richard Baker. The houses to our right, which have gardens backing on to Baker Street, were constructed between 1788 and 1794; but much of the street is more modern, a tribute to the city's culture and taste. It was favoured by many of our most prominent merchants and ship owners, but after these moved to areas beyond the city centre its character changed.

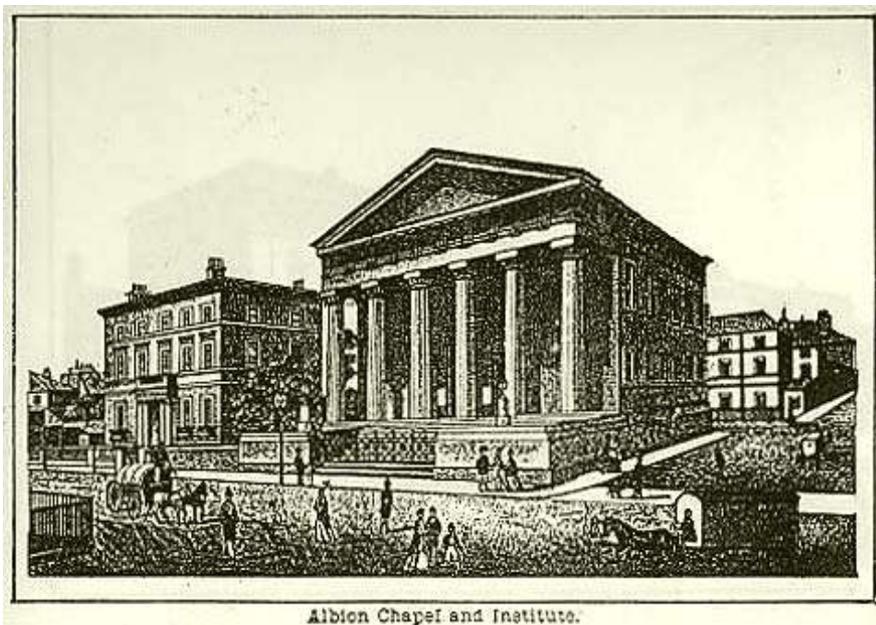
Let us walk down the right hand side of the street. We see a pleasant terrace of three-storey houses. Here at no. 33 lives Mr J G Wallis, a surgeon dentist. He is, as we shall see, one of many medical men who live in this street, where they can be close to their work in the Infirmary and also have their consulting rooms. Mr Wallis has a wife and 5 children. Next door, at no. 32, lives another surgeon, Mr James Savage. He has only recently moved in. We cross Union Street and come to no. 31, where lives another newcomer, Mr Alfred Francis, also a surgeon. At no. 30 lives Mrs Wigolsworth, a widow who shares her house with a companion and two servants. At no. 29 we find Mr Nicholson, a physician who has come to us from Brigg in Lincolnshire. He is a married man with 3 children. Next door to him lives Mr Amos, an engineer.



No. 27 is the Institute for Nurses and Nursing, an establishment for training those who tend to the sick. It is presided over by Mrs Jessie Jackson, and there are usually a few patients being cared for here.

Moving on, at no. 26 lives Mr Edward Owen Daly, a physician, with his household of wife, two children and three servants. Next door is Mr John Dix, a surgeon from Norfolk. Mr Dix is unmarried. No. 24 is the home of Mr Charles Lofthouse, a ship owner, and at no. 23 lives another Mr Daly, this one from Ireland. He is a physician and Justice of the Peace and, as befits his status, his family of wife and two children is maintained by 4 servants.

Next we come to the Kingston Nurses' Home, the residence for nurses from the Infirmary. Miss Wood has recently come to run this home. Next door, at no. 21, lives Mr Robert Nicholson, a surgeon from the Isle of Man. No. 20 is occupied by Mr Croke, a physician, and his assistant Mr Roberts. They have only recently moved in. At no. 19 lives a widow, Mrs Elizabeth Harbord. She has 4 children but, in her straitened circumstances, keeps no servants. Next door to her is Mr Charles Jackson, a dancing master.



Albion Chapel and Institute.

Crossing over Percy Street we come to the magnificent Albion Congregational Church, opened 50 years ago and costing £8,000. The front is a massive cut-stone Doric portico of six fluted columns, approached by a broad flight of steps rising ten feet to the door. The rest of the building is of white brick. There is seating here for 1,642 people, and underneath the chapel are schoolrooms and burial

vaults.ⁱ

Next is another splendid building, the Hull Church Institute. This was originally built as a house for the eminent physician Sir James Alderson M.D. Sir James was the fourth child of Dr John Alderson, another physician who contributed so much to the health and well-being of this city as physician and promoter of education. Sir James was born in 1794, was educated at Oxford and worked in London before returning to Hull on the death of his father, and taking over his practice. Sir James was a man of many interests. The classic style of this house reflects his concern with the best architecture. He was also a Fellow of the Royal Society and one of the founders of the Hull and East Riding School of Medicine and Anatomy, which opened in 1831. A few years earlier he published an account of his dissection of a huge whale which had been washed ashore at Tunstall. He studied the disastrous outbreak of cholera which afflicted Hull in 1849. He returned to London for good in 1850, and rose to be president of the Royal College of Physicians and physician extraordinary to her gracious Majesty. In 1864 this house was sold to the Hull Church Institute for £1,418. The Institute had been founded in 1845 and used premises in Osborne Street before coming to Albion Street. They have since added a reading room with an extensive library, and rooms are set aside for science, art and games. About 1,380 members use these facilities, and in the winter months lectures are very popular. There are also successful clubs for swimming, cricket and gymnastics connected with the Institute.



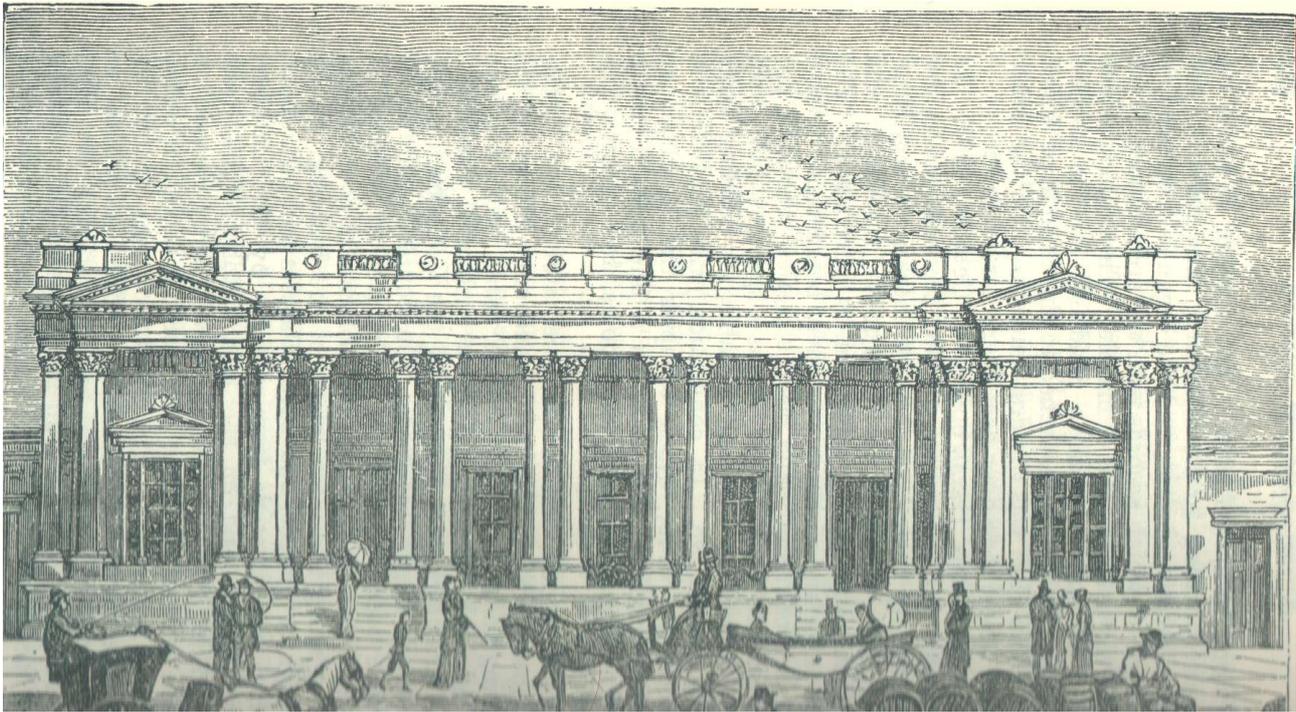
We have reached Prospect Street, and see before us the Infirmary, completed in 1784, and which was awarded the title “Royal” only 6 years ago following the visit by their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh.ⁱⁱ It will not detain us now. We turn back down the other side of Albion Streetⁱⁱⁱ, where we find first, at no. 17, the home of Mr Thomas Evans, a surgeon from Cambridgeshire. Next door lives Mr Henry Thompson, a Hull-born surgeon, with his wife and four children (and four servants). At no. 15 is Mr David Lawson, a Scottish surgeon, with his wife. Nos. 13 and 14 are the premises of Dr R M Craven, another surgeon. At no. 12 lives Mrs Isabella Cooper, the widow of a doctor. No. 11 is the home of Mr Robert Jackson, a retired merchant, and at no. 10 we find Miss Annie Martin, the distinguished music teacher. Crossing Story Street we come to no. 9, the home of Mr James Walker, an aural surgeon from Leeds.

At no. 8 we come to the Hull Friendly Societies' Hall, opened only four years ago and enlarged this year. Friendly Societies are very numerous here, with many lodges of such bodies as the Oddfellows, the Ancient Order of Foresters, the Free Gardeners, the Ancient Order of Druids, the Shepherds, the Sons of Temperance and the Rechabites. Many of them meet here, in large and commodious premises. There is a spacious hall at the rear, and a Friendly Societies Club with a fine billiard room and other facilities. The secretary is Mr Payne and the steward Mr Thomas Ward.

At no. 7 is the High School for Girls. Adjoining that is the home of Mr Pigeon, a surgeon from Gloucestershire, and then, at no. 5, the house of Alderman John Sherburn, who is a Justice of the Peace as well as a surgeon.

Then we come to what has been rightly called one of the chief architectural ornaments of the town – The Royal Institution. It is a cut-stone building covering 2,200 square yards. Its façade is 160 feet long and 40 feet high. In style and decoration it is most impressive, the design of Mr Cuthbert Brodrick, the notable Hull architect. It was opened on 24th October 1854 by HRH Prince Albert and at the Queen's command became the Hull Royal Institution.

This edifice houses two institutions. At the western end is the Hull Subscription Library, which dates back to 1775. Mr Thomas Lee, a local merchant, called a meeting of 50 people, drew up a code of rules and appointed a committee. The library's first premises were part of Mr Browne's bookshop, but they soon moved to a new, purpose-built library at the corner of Parliament Street and Whitefriargate. It transferred to this building in 1855, and now contains more than 45,000 volumes to suit all tastes. Since the library is only available to fee-paying members, it is to be



hoped that it will survive the imminent presence of free public libraries.^{iv}

Here we find also the Literary and Philosophical Society, established in 1822 for promoting literature, science and art. It was housed successively in the Old Exchange off Bowlalley Lane, in Parliament Street and then in Jarratt Street before coming here. The department is entered through a noble corridor 90 feet long by 25 feet wide, ornamented with Ionic columns and lighted from the top by three circular domes. On either side of the columns are aisles containing an extensive museum with a large collection of antiquities and curiosities. The museum is open daily at a charge of 6d each (or one penny on Saturday afternoons). In the rear is a large lecture hall, rooms for science and art classes and a laboratory. The curator is Mr S P Hudson. The building also houses Messrs Marris, Willow and Smith and a boarding house for their employees.

At no. 3 we find the Hull United Liberal Club. At the rear is the Gladstone Hall which can accommodate 300 people and is much used for soirées and other large gatherings. It has an entrance in Bond Street. In the Club can be found original portraits of those eminent Liberals Mr W E Gladstone, Mr C H Wilson M.P. and Mr James Reckitt. Mr Charles Nicholson is the steward.

No. 2 houses the Hull School of Art, with Mr Menzies as its head. The school is affiliated to the Literary and Philosophical Society. Finally we come to the house of Mr George Elliot, a physician from Ireland, and we are back at the junction with Bond Street.

Sources include:

Bulmer's 1892 Directory of Hull

1891 census

Brown's Guide to Hull, 1891

Dictionary of National Biography

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- i The building was largely destroyed by bombing in 1941 and the rest demolished in 1949.
- ii The old Infirmary lasted into the 1960s, when it was replaced by the building on Anlaby Road and demolished.
- iii The whole of this side of Albion St was destroyed by bombing during World War II.
- iv Public libraries came in 1893. The Subscription Library carried on, though financial difficulties led to its having to sell books in the early 20th century. It even survived the destruction of the building in 1943, moving into temporary premises and then into the Hull Church Institute in 1958. It finally closed in 1970 and its remaining stock was sold off in 1975.